



CELEBRATING 20 YEARS

BOARD MEETING

**SNC GOVERNING
BOARD MEETING**

SEPTEMBER 4 – 5, 2024

**This meeting will be held in
Mount Shasta (Siskiyou County), CA.**



Board Meeting Agenda

September 4 – 5, 2024 – Northwest Subregion – Mount Shasta, CA

Board Tour

September 4, 2024
1:00 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Shasta Inn
1211 S. Mt. Shasta Boulevard
Mount Shasta, CA 96067

Members of the Board and staff will participate in a field trip to explore issues and activities related to forest resilience, sustainable recreation, and conservation and stewardship of natural and working lands in the Northwest Subregion. Members of the public are invited to participate in the field tour but are responsible for their own transportation and lunch. The tour will start in the parking lot of the Shasta Inn located at 1211 S. Mt. Shasta Boulevard in Mount Shasta, CA.

Board Reception

September 4, 2024
5:00 – 6:00 p.m.

Harvest Restaurant
1211 S. Mt. Shasta Boulevard
Mount Shasta, CA 96067

Following the Board tour, Boardmembers and staff will attend a reception open to the public.

Board Meeting

September 5, 2024
9:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. (End time is approximate)

Mount Shasta City Park – Lower Lodge
1315 Nixon Road
Mount Shasta, CA 96067

- 1. Call to Order**
- 2. Oath of Office for New Boardmembers**

3. Roll Call

4. [Approval of June 6, 2024, Meeting Minutes \(ACTION\)](#)

5. Board Chair's Report

6. Executive Officer's Report (INFORMATIONAL)

- a. Executive Officer Update
- b. [Administrative Update](#)
- c. [Policy & Outreach Update](#)

7. [Grant 1692 Alpine Meadows and Olympic Valley Fire Protection Project Amendment \(ACTION\)](#)

The Board will consider and may approve an amendment to the Alpine Meadows and Olympic Valley Fire Protection Project (#1692) with the National Forest Foundation, with a California Environmental Quality Act Notice of Exemption (CEQA).

8. [Regional Forest and Fire Capacity Program CEQA Determination and Award Recommendation \(ACTION\)](#)

The Board may make determinations under CEQA and award a subgrant under the previously approved RFFCP.

a. [#1722-RFFCP](#)

The (RFFCP2022) WIP Capacity Subgrant – CHIRP Nisenan in Nevada County to the California Heritage: Indigenous Research Project with a CEQA Notice of Determination as a Responsible Agency.

9. [Boundary Expansion Geography Overview \(INFORMATIONAL\)](#)

Staff and Regional partners will present an overview of the boundary expansion geography, opportunities, and needs.

10. [Regional Priority Plan Update \(INFORMATIONAL\)](#)

Staff will provide an update on the Sierra Nevada Conservancy's Regional Priority Plan, which will identify and display information about partnerships and forest health and wildfire resilience projects across the Region.

11. [California Jobs First Program Update \(INFORMATIONAL\)](#)

Staff will provide an update on California Jobs First Program activities across the Sierra-Cascade Region.

12. Boardmembers' Comments

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

13. 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.

14. Adjournment

Additional Board Materials

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

Additional Information

Meeting materials are available on the [SNC website](http://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

June 6, 2024 – Southeast Subregion – Bishop, CA

Board Meeting

Cerro Coso Community College – Bishop Campus – 4090 W. Line Street, Bishop, CA 93514

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 9:00 a.m.

2. Oath of Office for New Boardmembers

No new Boardmembers were present, and no oaths were administered.

3. Roll Call

Present:

- Ed Valenzuela
- Elizabeth Cavasso
- Lisa Lien-Mager
- Jack Garamendi
- Cindy Gustafson
- Jeff Griffiths
- Chris Heppe
- Bob Johnston
- Michele Perrault
- Victoria Rome
- Dennis Townsend
- Elizabeth Berger
- Cicely Muldoon

Absent:

- John Brissenden

4. Approval of March 7, 2024, Meeting Minutes (ACTION)

Boardmember Victoria Rome suggested a correction in the Policy & Outreach Update, amending AB 867 to SB 867.

Boardmember Jack Garamendi moved and Boardmember Elizabeth Cavasso seconded a motion to approve the March 7, 2024, Meeting Minutes.

After a Board vote the results were: Aye –10, Nay – 0, Abstain – 0. The motion passed.

5. Board Chair's Report (ACTION)

Board Vice Chair Ed Valenzuela read SNC Resolution Number 06-24-02 into the record.

Boardmember Ed Valenzuela moved and Boardmember Jeff Griffiths seconded a motion to adopt 06-24-02: Honoring former Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) Board Chair Terry O'Brien for his years of dedicated service and contributions to the SNC.

After a Board vote the results were: Aye – 10, Nay – 0, Abstain – 0. The motion passed.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

6. Executive Officer's Report (INFORMATIONAL)

a. Executive Officer Update

Executive Officer, Angela Avery, began by thanking four presenters and attendees for joining the previous day's Board Tour and for their patience with the hot weather during the event. Avery emphasized the uniqueness of the eastern Sierra and the need for critical work in the Subregion. Avery followed by thanking Supervisor Jeff Griffiths for helping to organize June's Governing Board dinner and the Board for approving Terry O'Brien's Resolution 06-24-02. Avery reviewed that Terry O'Brien and Heather Bernikoff have departed from the Governing Board, opening two governmental appointee positions. She announced that Nathan Voegeli was recently appointed by the governor to fill one of those two vacancies. Avery gave a background of Voegeli's experience with the state of California as Deputy Legal Affairs Secretary, Senior Advisor for tribal negotiations, and his multiple roles within the Department of Fish & Wildlife. Avery will schedule a time to meet, welcome, and introduce Voegeli to the SNC Governing Board. Avery stated that there is one remaining vacancy on the Governing Board.

Avery informed the Board of the departure of Julie Alvis, who returned to the California Natural Resources Agency as Deputy Assistant Secretary for Administration. Avery complimented Alvis's critical work to the SNC and acknowledged the valuable mentorship she provided to the Executive Office. Next, Avery reviewed the organizational impact the departure has on the SNC, including Amy Lussier taking on the role of Acting Chief Deputy Executive Officer and Division Chief's temporary reporting reassignments.

Avery announced that on March 29, 2024, a hybrid workforce memo was released to SNC staff that was based on an April 10, 2024, governor's office memo that clarified hybrid workforce expectations. She then updated the Board on the current implementation of the mandatory two days in office, hybrid work schedule, listing SNC staff return-to-office dates.

Avery informed the Board of the release of the May Revise, describing the impact of the budget on grant proposals. On April 29, 2024, the Department of Finance released Budget Letter 24-07, which placed a freeze on one-time appropriations of General Fund dollars for projects over \$1 million dollars (among other criteria), affecting some of SNC's grant projects. The SNC responded by adding conditional approval language to the affected grant projects, allowing affected grants to move forward upon passage of the 2024 Budget Act. One final project is still to be brought to the Board in September 2024 for consideration, which will then fully award SNC's General Fund local assistance funding.

Avery updated the Board on three bonds also being considered by the Senate and watched by SNC, until June 27, 2024, the deadline for getting initiatives onto the November ballot. The SNC will continue to explore investment opportunities and partnerships to continue to serve the Region. Avery stressed that having funding to support important project work is key, but the SNC is thinking creatively to continue to support the Region.

Avery acknowledged the hard work of the SNC and its ability to award \$129,249,352 in General Fund to 114 projects since 2020, not including the projects currently before the Board. Avery celebrated the work and impact that the SNC has made in the Region.

Avery ended by introducing Budget Analyst Amy Nelson to give the Administrative Update.

b. Administrative Update

Budget Analyst Amy Nelson presented on behalf of Deputy Executive Officer, Administration Amy Lussier. Nelson presented the Administrative Staff Report

provided in the Board materials and noted key events related to the preparation and upcoming release of the 2024-25 budget. Nelson summarized important California budget release dates and key events, describing their purpose and impact on the SNC. She explained that the grants before the Board were the only grants impacted by the language of Budget Letter 24-07. Nelson updated the Board on the expected release of the state budget, May Revise solution totals, and that the SNC is not currently included in reductions in the May Revise. She elaborated that the 2024-25 budget is what the SNC expected, including SNC's base fund (Environmental License Plate Fund) and reimbursement authority.

Nelson concluded that the SNC will report any further budget solutions to the Governing Board.

Nelson stated that the Budget Unit, Accounting Unit, and Business Services were working on fiscal year-end and that the new fiscal year begins July 1, 2024.

Nelson invited Department of Finance Boardmember Michele Perrault to provide additional budget information.

Boardmember Perrault added that the SNC was not the only Board impacted by the freezing of grant funds. Perrault said that ultimately boards and commissions will be able to move forward with their work and consider and conditionally approve grants that might be contained within the freeze letter. Perrault continued to explain that if the budget is passed and the dollars are still included in the fund, conditional approvals will allow for the work to be moved forward without coming back to boards. The Department of Finance continues to meet and believes a three-party deal, which includes the Administration, will move forward. She did not anticipate the budget being passed late. Perrault stated that the Administration is seeking space where solutions are least impactful on people and projects and that, with the Internal Revenue Service having no pushback on filing deadlines, a better forecasting picture is expected for the next budget year. She announced that while there is an anticipated budget shortfall in the upcoming budget years, the state is working to be as efficient as possible to address it. Perrault complimented the lawmakers' ability to tap into the reserves and California for having healthy reserves.

c. Policy & Outreach Update

Emily Blackmer, Policy Analyst, provided supplemental updates to the Policy & Outreach Update staff report provided in the Board materials. Blackmer started with a State Legislative update, summarizing relevant bills being tracked by the SNC and elaborating on their impact, including AB 2465, AB 3023, climate bond bills AB 1567 and SB 867, AB 1284, SB 1101 and unspecified bills related to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and state administrative processes.

Blackmer described the efforts of the SNC Communications Team in developing a media wall in the CNRA building, the SNC Impact Report's usage by Sierra Day, and Secretary Wade Crowfoot's compliment of the report.

Blackmer updated the Board on the Regional Forest and Fire Capacity Program (RFFCP) agreements, funds, and Tribal Empowerment and Mentorship Program launch.

Blackmer updated the Board on the SNC Science Unit work, including a co-hosted forest and watershed field tour for the Beijing Academy of Forestry, participation in a post-fire restoration work group by the SNC Regional Scientist, Sarah Campe, and a pilot program to be developed and modeled after the concepts of the work group.

Boardmember Lisa Lien-Mager commented on the media wall, stating she sees it daily in the CNRA building and it's an example of good story telling.

7. *Wildfire Recovery and Forest Resilience Directed Grant Program Award Recommendations (ACTION)*

Field Operations & Grants Division Chief, Andy Fristensky, provided the Board with a PowerPoint presentation that included a brief background on grant funding and grant criteria guidelines established in December 2021, followed by a review of the project summaries and staff recommendations for each grant provided in the Board materials. Staff recommended four Wildfire Recovery and Forest Resilience Directed Grant Program projects totaling \$6,053,198.

a. #1637

Little Deer Creek Landscape Resilience Project in Nevada County in the amount of \$823,500 to the Yuba Watershed Institute with a CEQA Notice of Exemption.

Boardmember Victoria Rome asked for clarification on the implementation schedule of the approved staff recommendations. Fristensky elaborated on the schedule.

Boardmember Robert Johnson inquired if there were letters of support or opposition submitted. Fristensky responded that only letters of support had been received and no letters of opposition.

Boardmember Chris Heppe shared his appreciation for partners pulling the project together, giving the Yuba Watershed Institute special recognition. He thanked the Board for considering the project on behalf of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and explained that due to limited resources, the BLM is unable to pay for the project. He stated this project does tie to a programmatic National Environmental

Protection Act (NEPA) document and is an efficient way to get the planning and compliance completed.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Action

Boardmember Cindy Gustafson moved and Boardmember Dennis Townsend seconded a motion to authorize the Executive Officer to file a Notice of Exemption for the Little Deer Creek Landscape Resilience Project (1637), authorize a grant award in the amount of \$823,500 to the Yuba Watershed Institute, and authorize staff to enter into agreements necessary for project implementation.

After a Board vote the results were: Aye – 10, Nay – 0, Abstain – 0. The motion passed.

b. #1663

Northwest End Royal Gorge Fuels Reduction project in Placer County in the amount of \$1,280,200 to the Truckee Donner Land Trust and authorize the filing of a CEQA Notice of Determination as a responsible agency.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Boardmember Cindy Gustafson commented on the Truckee Donner Land Trust doing an amazing job of managing the property. Gustafson emphasized the critical infrastructure close to the project and supported the need to protect this infrastructure with the proposed project work.

Boardmember Cindy Gustafson asked if there was an attempt made to reduce the requested funds to under a million. Angela Avery responded that a reduction was discussed, but the SNC wanted to ensure the project was implemented at a scale that maintained maximum impact.

1. CEQA Determination

Boardmember Jack Garamendi moved and Boardmember Elizabeth Cavasso seconded a motion to certify that the Governing Board independently reviewed and considered the information in the Timber Harvesting Plan No. 2-23-00120-PLA, adopted by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, and all mitigation measures required within, and if the Board concurs with the Timber Harvesting Plan No. 2-23-00120-PLA, find that the Timber Harvesting Plan complies

with the conditions contained within CEQA Guidelines, section 15253, subd. (b) allowing the SNC to rely on the Timber Harvesting Plan for its determination as a responsible agency under CEQA.

After a Board vote the results were: Aye – 10, Nay – 0, Abstain – 0. The motion passed.

2. Action- Project Determination

Boardmember Cindy Gustafson moved and Boardmember Ed Valenzuela seconded a motion to authorize the Executive Officer to file a Notice of Determination as a responsible agency for the Northwest End Royal Gorge Fuels Reduction project (1663), conditionally approve, based on funding availability as of the 2024 Budget Act, a grant award in the amount of \$1,280,200 to the Truckee Donner Land Trust, and authorize staff to enter into agreements necessary for project implementation.

After a Board vote the results were: Aye – 10, Nay – 0, Abstain – 0. The motion passed.

c. #1689

Hat Creek Lumber project in Shasta County in the amount of \$1,500,000 to the Pit Resource Conservation District and authorize the filing of a CEQA Notice of Determination as a responsible agency.

Public Comment

Todd Sloat from Pit Resource Conservation District & Hat Creek Lumber: Sloat offered to answer any questions from the Governing Board and thanked SNC staff for its reliable communication since March 2024. Sloat updated the Board on pieces of the project already in motion and reiterated the key points of the grant proposal, the need for the unique work being provided, and the possibility of expansion into other areas of California.

Boardmember Johnston commented on his excitement for the project, commending the integration of business interests. Johnston asked Sloat to elaborate on how this project is considered thinning rather than logging.

Boardmembers engaged in conversation surrounding selective removal, forest thinning, and logging with Sloat.

1. CEQA Determination

Boardmember Dennis Townsend moved and Boardmember Jeff Griffiths seconded a motion to certify that the Governing Board independently reviewed and considered the information in the Eastside Aggregates Project Environmental Impact Report

(2000), with Addendum 1 (2016) and Addendum 2 (2023), and accompanying Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program, and SNC's CEQA Findings; and the Board concurs with the Eastside Aggregates Project Environmental Impact Report and Addenda, and adopt the SNC's CEQA Findings.

After a Board vote the results were: Aye – 10, Nay – 0, Abstain – 0. The motion passed.

2. Action- Project Determination

Boardmember Dennis Townsend moved and Boardmember Cavasso seconded a motion to authorize the Executive Officer to file a Notice of Determination as a responsible agency for the Hat Creek Lumber project (1689), conditionally approve, based on funding availability as of the 2024 Budget Act, a grant award in the amount of \$1,500,000 to the Pit Resource Conservation District, and authorize staff to enter into agreements necessary for project implementation.

After a Board vote the results were: Aye –10, Nay – 0, Abstain – 0. The motion passed.

d. #1692

Alpine Meadows and Olympic Valley Fire Protection Project in Placer County in the amount of \$2,449,498 to the National Forest Foundation with a CEQA Notice of Exemption.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Boardmembers engaged in a discussion surrounding the details of the project's boundaries and location, impact, and staff considerations made.

Action

Boardmember Cindy Gustafson moved and Boardmember Jeff Griffiths seconded a motion to authorize the Executive Officer to file a Notice of Exemption for the Alpine Meadows and Olympic Valley Fire Protection Project (1692), conditionally approve, based on funding availability as of the 2024 Budget Act, a grant award in the amount of \$2,449,498 to the National Forest Foundation, and authorize staff to enter into agreements necessary for project implementation.

After a Board vote the results were: Aye – 10, Nay – 0, Abstain – 0. The motion passed.

8. Grant 1289 Graham Landscape Planning Project Amendment (ACTION)

Field Operations & Grants Division Chief, Andy Fristensky, provided the Board with a PowerPoint presentation that included a brief background, followed by a review of the project summary and staff recommendations for the grant amendment provided in the Board materials.

Public Comment

Leana Weissberg, California Director for American Forests, thanked the Board for its time and offered to answer any questions regarding the project. Weissberg gave context of the project's development and how the adjusted scope would provide further value to the landscape. Weissberg voiced her commitment to seeing the project completed and shared her opinion that it would be a large asset to the ranger district. Weissberg concluded by thanking the Governing Board for its consideration and the SNC staff for its recommendation.

Action

Boardmember Dennis Townsend moved and Boardmember Elizabeth Cavasso seconded a motion to authorize the Executive Officer to file a Notice of Exemption for the Graham Landscape Planning Project (1289), approve the revised project scope per the Exhibit A, and authorize staff to amend the grant agreement with American Forests.

After a Board vote the results were: Aye – 10, Nay – 0, Abstain – 0. The motion passed.

9. 2024-2029 Strategic Plan (ACTION)

- Attachment A: Draft 2024-2029 Strategic Plan

Policy & Outreach Division Chief, Brittany Covich, thanked the core staff who worked on the development of the Strategic Plan: Julie Alvis, Andy Fristensky, and Amy Nelson. Covich then thanked the Strategic Plan Board Committee, consisting of prior Boardmember Heather Bernikoff and current Boardmember John Brissenden, for its feedback during the plan's development, and shared appreciation for the work of the final document writing and design team, including staff members Emily Blackmer, Sarah Campe, Isaac Silverman and Ali Sambucetti. Covich presented the plan development process, public comment process, estimated timeline of adoption, and work completed on the 2024-2029 Strategic Plan. Covich presented the final draft of the 2024-2029 Strategic Plan for Board consideration and approval.

Boardmembers complimented SNC staff on the hard work and flexible Strategic Plan, suggesting it as a good model for other agencies. They voiced appreciation for

the plan's development process, sharing approval of the consistent staff updates, number of opportunities to ask questions, implementation of Boardmember feedback, timely completion, and carefully considered language and definitions. Boardmembers encouraged staff to continue the momentum and to keep capacity levels and education moving forward.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Action

Boardmember Jeff Griffiths moved and Boardmember Ed Valenzuela seconded a motion to approve the draft 2024-2029 Strategic Plan and direct staff to take the necessary actions for its successful implementation.

After a Board vote the results were: Aye – 10, Nay – 0, Abstain – 0. The motion passed.

10. Action Plan Update (ACTION)

- Attachment A: Draft 2024-2025 Action Plan

Policy & Outreach Division Chief, Brittany Covich, reported on work and accomplishments completed under the 2023-2024 Action Plan and presented the key actions and draft of the 2024-2025 Action Plan for Board consideration and approval.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Action

Boardmember Elizabeth Cavasso moved and Boardmember Jack Garamendi seconded a motion to approve the draft 2024-25 Action Plan and direct staff to take the necessary actions for its successful implementation.

After a Board vote the results were: Aye – 10, Nay – 0, Abstain – 0. The motion passed.

11. Boardmembers' Comments

Boardmember Ed Valenzuela acknowledged former Mono County Supervisor Stacy Corless and thanked Corless for attending the meeting.

12. Public Comments

There was no public comment.

13. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 10:44 a.m.

Additional Board Materials

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

**Sierra Nevada Conservancy
September 5, 2024**

Agenda Item 6b: Administrative Update

Human Resources

The Sierra Nevada Conservancy's (SNC) Board Support Unit is undergoing a transition as Tristyn Armstrong, SNC's Board Liaison, has reduced her hours as she gets closer to retirement. Amy Nelson has been promoted to the position of Board Support Unit Manager. Amy is training with Tristyn on Board duties and Tristyn will remain involved with Board services. The training during this transitional period will ensure all Board services remain consistent. Boardmembers needing support are encouraged to reach out to Tristyn, Amy N., or Tori Weber.

Business Services

The SNC has renewed the lease on its headquarters building in Auburn, which includes a minor reduction in square footage and facility updates for improved safety and security. The improvements are expected to be completed in the fall and include a fenced area for SNC's fleet vehicles.

Information Technology

The California Natural Resources Agency (CNRA) is working on major updates to information technology (IT) security policies and departments have been directed to implement these policies as they are finalized. The SNC will update all applicable IT policies as the CNRA model policies are released to remain in compliance and ensure sound IT practices.

Budget

The Budget Act of 2024 was signed by Governor Newsom on June 26, 2024. The SNC's 2024-25 appropriations are as expected. A verbal update will be provided to the Board regarding required savings in 2024-25 once information is received from the Department of Finance and/or CNRA.

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
September 5, 2024

Agenda Item 6c: Policy & Outreach Update

Background

The Policy & Outreach Division supports Sierra Nevada Conservancy's (SNC) role as a bridge between the Region and the state. Staff members focus on educating key decisionmakers about the value of the Sierra-Cascade Region and communicating about the Region's policy and funding needs. In addition, Policy & Outreach also works alongside the Field Operations & Grants Division to educate partners about state policy and program trends to support alignment between in-Region projects and state goals. 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.

Current Status

State Legislative Update

Staff has been tracking and providing technical assistance on several bills since the June Board Meeting. The 2023-24 legislative session concludes August 31. The governor has until the end of September to sign or veto bills passed by the Legislature. Heading into the final weeks of the session, the SNC is tracking several priority bills:

- Senate Bill (SB) 867 by Senator Allen (D-Santa Monica), the Safe Drinking Water, Wildfire Prevention, Drought Preparedness, and Clean Air Bond Act of 2024, passed and was signed by Senate President Pro Tempore Mike McGuire (D-North Coast) in July. The \$10 billion bond, now titled Proposition 4, will appear on the November 5 general election ballot and requires a majority vote to be enacted. If approved by voters, it would direct \$33.5 million to the SNC for watershed improvement, forest health, biomass utilization, and forest-restoration workforce development and \$48 million to the SNC to address the impacts of climate change upon communities, fish and wildlife, and natural resources.
- Assembly Bill (AB) 2465 by Assemblymember Gipson (D-Carson) would require the SNC and multiple other natural-resources departments to prioritize the awarding of grant funding to socially disadvantaged organizations until January 1, 2031. AB 2465 would amend SNC's statutes to require grant applications submitted by socially disadvantaged organizations be awarded additional points equal to 15 percent of the total points, not require matching funds, and not penalize an organization based upon its experience implementing similar projects. A "socially disadvantaged organization" is defined as a nonprofit organization in

which the majority of its board of directors are members of a socially disadvantaged group, which is defined primarily on the basis of race or ethnicity. This bill passed out of the Assembly and Senate policy committees and was moved to the Senate Appropriations Committee suspense file on July 1.

- Assembly Bill (AB) 3023 by Assemblymember Papan (D-San Mateo) would require the Wildfire and Forest Resilience Task Force and California Natural Resources Agency (CNRA) to develop an interagency funding strategy that will coordinate state watershed restoration plans with forest-resilience-planning efforts to achieve outcomes more aligned with an ecosystem-based approach. This bill would also require CNRA and other state entities to review and update relevant grant guidelines for climate change, biodiversity, conservation, fire, and watershed-restoration programs to encourage projects with multiple benefits. If feasible, similar grant programs across entities would be encouraged to develop a shared, consolidated application process. This bill passed out of the Assembly and Senate policy committees and has been referred to the Senate Appropriations Committee.

August 2024 Legislative Field Tour

Staff hosted a field tour in partnership with Truckee Donner Land Trust (TDLT) and the South Yuba River Citizens League (SYRCL) for a legislative audience on August 2. The one-day forest and watershed-health tour brought participants to Donner Summit – headwaters of both the American and Yuba rivers – to learn about nature-based climate solutions. The goal of the tour was to help participants develop a better understanding of the SNC and partners' work, and to build a positive affinity for the Sierra-Cascade Region. Stops included forest restoration, land conservation, recreation, and community-wildfire protection efforts on TDLT's Royal Gorge property in northern Placer County, as well as the multi-phase Van Norden Meadow Restoration project led by SYRCL, which straddles northern Placer and southeastern Nevada counties. Together, these projects demonstrate how ecosystems are interconnected and can produce wide-ranging benefits for landscapes, communities, and critical natural resources. Invitations were directed to legislative members and staff who work on issues pertaining to SNC and the Region, as well as those who represent the Sierra-Cascade Region. Colleagues from CNRA were also invited.

July 2024 CA Wildfire and Forest Resilience Task Force Meeting

Policy & Outreach Division Chief Brittany Covich participated in the Aligning Regional Investments panel discussion at the CA Wildfire and Forest Resilience Task Force's quarterly meeting in Sacramento. The panel included state and regional leaders discussing strategies, needs, and next steps to align and coordinate state, federal, and private funding to better support regional forest health and wildfire-risk-reduction efforts. Covich provided an update on the [SNC's approach to aligning and optimizing state and federal funding](#), spoke about how [the SNC is building the capacity of partners to work at the landscape scale](#), and shared some of the lessons learned from SNC's Landscape Grant Pilot Program.

Regional Forest and Fire Capacity Program Update

The SNC Governing Board approved receipt of three Regional Forest and Fire Capacity Program (RFFCP) block grants for a total of \$24.17 million from the California Department of Conservation (DOC). The overarching goal of the RFFCP is to increase the ability of partners to develop, prioritize, and implement wildfire- and forest-resilience projects and support the development of Regional priority strategies aimed at restoring health and resilience to communities, forests, and other wildfire-prone landscapes. The SNC is distributing this funding directly to partners through subgrants and by providing Region-wide technical assistance.

Subgrants Status

The SNC provided a total of 30 subgrants to our partners through our first two rounds of RFFCP funding. Of those 30, one-third have closed out, with the rest still active. Staff is currently working with additional subgrantees to finalize approximately 25 more scopes of work and agreements to support capacity building, project-pipeline development, and the development of Regional Priority Plans.

Tribal Capacity Building Pilot Program Update

As was reported to the Board in June, staff launched the Tribal Capacity Building Pilot Program in the spring of 2024. The pilot has been designed in response to needs tribes have directly expressed to the SNC and will include group trainings and workshops, peer learning, one-on-one support, and technical assistance. The goals of the Tribal Capacity Building Pilot Program are to:

- Build capacity of tribes to obtain, administer, and implement grants
- Connect tribes to local natural-resource planning and program implementation
- Build peer support and mentorship relationships among tribes
- Provide participants opportunities to put skills into practice to meet specific needs, take advantage of opportunities, and develop demonstration projects
- Support tribes in the leadership and development of their own priority projects

Seventeen applicants, representing tribes and tribal organizations from across the Sierra-Cascade, applied to join the initial Tribal Capacity Building Pilot cohort, and, at the time of this report, evaluations of those applicants were underway. Staff anticipate selecting the participants for this pilot program by August, with grant agreements in place by October 2024. The bulk of activities of the Tribal Capacity Building Program will take place in 2025-2026, with a possible extension into the spring of 2027. Cohort members who demonstrate progress may be eligible for demonstration project funding to practice and expand their skills.

Regional Science Update

On June 6, SNC's Regional Scientist participated in a field tour of the Teakettle Experimental Forest within the Sierra National Forest. The tour was for federal, state, and local agency staff, non-governmental organization partners, and resource experts in preparation for the [Teakettle Prescribed Burn](#) project, which is intended to reintroduce fire to a 3,800-acre landscape that has, by and large, not burned for over 150 years. Historically, naturally ignited wildfires and cultural burning moved fire through this landscape every 15-20 years, reducing fuels, burning small trees, and selecting for most fire-resistant species and individuals. The Teakettle Prescribed Burn will begin again the process of using fire to reduce fuels and thin forests, reducing both the risk of high-severity fire and enhancing resilience to drought, insects, and pathogens.

The Teakettle Prescribed Burn is serving as a proof-of-concept project for reintroducing fire at a landscape scale in a complex environment. Teakettle Experimental Forest is remote, so bringing in burn crews and resources are difficult. The Sierra National Forest is also located within the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District (SJVAPCD), one of the most polluted areas in the state. Although the SJVAPCD recognizes the value of prescribed burning to help mitigate the severity of future wildfires and accompanying smoke, windows in which burning is allowed are few. Further complicating things, Teakettle is within the range of the endangered Pacific fisher and other special-status species, like the Yosemite toad and California spotted owl. Protections for these species limit spring burning, which is the time of year when conditions and air quality are best for burning. Reconciling these competing considerations is a challenge not just for Teakettle, but for prescribed burns across the Region. The Teakettle project will inevitably have lessons that will advance our understanding of how and when we reintroduce fire to Sierra-Cascade landscapes at scale.

The lessons learned from Teakettle and other landscape-scale projects are important because there remains an urgency to work at scale: After two consecutive wet winters, vegetation growth and subsequent fuels loads are high. This, coupled with [seasonal temperature projections](#) for a hotter-than-normal summer and fall means that, at the time of this report in early August, the state is well into an [active wildfire season](#) with over half of a million acres burned in the Region. The [Park Fire](#) alone is responsible for more than 400,000 acres, making it the fourth largest wildfire in California history. With this in mind, the SNC continues to engage and support landscape-scale planning and projects: The Landscape Grant Program Pilot award to the [Healthy Eldorado Partnership](#) has helped catalyze a broad and active partnership that has pulled in tens of millions of dollars in additional funding to restore and treat landscapes within the Eldorado National Forest. Other SNC-supported landscape-scale planning and implementation efforts are happening throughout the Region, spearheaded by diverse partnerships like the [Trinity Collaborative](#), [Giant Sequoia Lands Coalition](#), and [Middle Truckee River Partnership](#). These efforts, like the Teakettle Prescribed Burn, will help the SNC continue to identify successful pathways to resilience and trouble-shoot impediments to working at scale.

Communications Update

The SNC published three Sierra Spotlight posts this quarter highlighting the critical work throughout the Sierra-Cascade and publicly announcing the adoption of the new five-year Strategic Plan. Immediately following the June Board Meeting, the [SNC adopting a new five-year Strategic Plan](#) was published.

That was quickly followed by [a nature-based solution to reduce wildfire risk in Amador County](#) and an article about a grant to the Placer Land Trust that [expanded the Big Hill Preserve and vital habitat connectivity in the Sierra foothills](#) north of Auburn.

Getting the most attention was [SNC adopting a new five-year Strategic Plan](#), which was shared by Yuba Net and the Sierra Sun. The news about SNC's grant to the 40-Acre Conservation League continues to receive coverage, as both [Living on Earth](#) and the [Los Angeles Times](#) published stories on the Black-led land trust purchasing its first property.

The social media staff was as busy as most air conditioning units the past few months, as well, highlighting recent SNC accomplishments and actions, including the new Strategic Plan and the incredible work being done in the Sierra-Cascade. This didn't go unnoticed, as the Big Hill Preserve and View 88 posts received many "likes" and "hearts" on Facebook and Twitter.

The most positive feedback via social media went to mention of SNC's grant to the American River Conservancy's acquisition of the Gold Hill Ranch and Wakamatsu Tea and Silk Colony, as well as staff's tour with the 40-Acre Conservation League on its newly acquired land.

Next Steps

Staff will be working to close out SNC's 20th anniversary year by publishing Sierra Spotlight posts and other communications celebrating SNC's work and the work of partners since its creation in 2004. The SNC's RFFCP capacity-building work will continue and will include the development of a beta version of the SNC's Regional Priority Plan deliverable. Staff will also be tracking any major wildfire events in the Region and will continue to respond to requests for information about SNC's projects and programs from legislative staff and other key decisionmakers.

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
September 5, 2024

Agenda Item 7: Grant 1692 Alpine Meadows and Olympic Valley Fire Protection Project Amendment

Background

In June 2024, the Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) Governing Board authorized a grant to the National Forest Foundation (NFF) for #1692 Alpine Meadows and Olympic Valley Fire Protection Project in the amount of \$2,449,498. The Governing Board determined that the project was exempt from the conditions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Public Resources Code, Section 4799.05, subd. (d)(1), which states that CEQA does not apply to prescribed fire, reforestation, habitat restoration, thinning, or fuel-reduction projects, or to related activities undertaken 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. On March 8, 2024, the Tahoe National Forest (TNF) approved a Decision Memo and Categorical Exclusion for the Alpine Meadows and Olympic Valley Fire Protection Project. This NEPA document covers the entire project area and evaluates all activities proposed as part of the project. The SNC filed a Notice of Exemption with the Governor's Office of Planning and Research and the Placer County Clerk-Recorder and entered into a grant agreement with the NFF on July 23, 2024.

The original project, as awarded, was for the NFF's Alpine Meadows and Olympic Valley Fire Protection Project to utilize a combination of mastication, timber thinning, hand thinning, and piling to treat at least 764 acres of the TNF surrounding the community of Alpine Meadows. The project site is currently characterized by overly dense stands with a high component of shade-tolerant red and white fir, many of which are of small diameter and growing in thick patches under the canopies of larger trees. The forest-treatment prescription within the Exhibit A of the grant agreement that is pertinent to this amendment is: "Surface and ladder fuels, and small trees up to 16 inches diameter at breast height (DBH) will be mechanically thinned, masticated, grapple or tractor piled, and/or manually cut and piled for later burning or other disposal." This is the description that was provided in the grant proposal, and to the SNC Governing Board in June 2024.

Current Status

After the grant was awarded and the SNC was developing the grant agreement with the NFF, the NFF clarified the need and intent to remove some trees larger than 16 inches DBH in specific circumstances. The NEPA Categorical Exclusion for the project allows this, as it states: "Thinning would focus on the removal of smaller diameter trees (up to 16 inches DBH); however, live trees up to 30 inches DBH may be removed in limited circumstances where both the following conditions occur: 1) the larger diameter material

is located in an area that is accessible by mechanical equipment, and 2) where a 16-inch diameter limit would not adequately reduce flame lengths to desired conditions in the WUI threat and defense zones.” The grantee expects most of the trees over 16 inches that will need to be removed will be dead or dying red or white fir.

The SNC staff recommends that grant agreement #1692 be amended to include language within the Scope of Work reflecting this need to remove some trees over 16 inches DBH in specific circumstances. There would be no other changes to grant agreement for this amendment.

CEQA Compliance: As the March 2024 Decision Memo and Categorical Exclusion for the Alpine Meadows and Olympic Valley Fire Protection Project includes removing live trees up to 30 inches DBH under specified circumstances, the amended project remains 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 NEPA, if the primary role of the state or local agency is providing funding or staffing for those projects. The Governing Board may determine that the project amendment is exempt from CEQA, authorize the Executive Officer to amend grant agreement #1692 Alpine Meadows and Olympic Valley Fire Protection Project with the NFF, and file a new Notice of Exemption reflecting the amended scope of work.

[Access the Project Details and the Notice of Exemption \(Project #1692\)](#)

Next Steps

Upon authorization by the Board, staff will file the CEQA Notice of Exemption, amend grant agreement #1692 Alpine Meadows and Olympic Valley Fire Protection Project with the NFF, and NFF will proceed with project implementation, in partnership with the TNF.

Recommendation

Staff recommends the Board authorize the Executive Officer to file a Notice of Exemption for the Alpine Meadows and Olympic Valley Fire Protection Project (1692) amendment, approve the revised project scope per the Exhibit A, and authorize staff to amend the grant agreement with National Forest Foundation.

Exhibit A

Sierra Nevada Conservancy Wildfire Recovery and Forest Resilience Directed Grant Program SNC Project Number 1692 – Amendment

SNC ID Number: 1692

Applicant: National Forest Foundation

Project Title: Alpine Meadows and Olympic Valley Fire Protection Project

SNC Subregion: North Central

County: Placer

Funding Amount Awarded: \$2,449,498

Funding Amount Amended: \$2,449,498

Funding Authority: California Budget Act of 2023

Project Scope / Description

The Alpine Meadows and Olympic Valley Fire Protection Project (Project) will provide strategic hazardous fuels reduction treatments within the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) Defense and Threat zones to mitigate wildfire risk for the communities of Alpine Meadows and Olympic Valley. The Project is located in eastern Placer County between Truckee and Tahoe City, primarily to the west of Highway 89. The Project will use mastication, timber thinning, hand thinning, and piling to treat at least 764 acres of National Forest System lands surrounding the community of Alpine Meadows. The National Forest Foundation (NFF) is the grantee in partnership with the Tahoe National Forest (TNF).

The Project area is currently characterized by overly dense timber stands with a high component of shade-tolerant red and white fir, many of which are of small diameter and are growing in thick patches under the canopies of larger trees. These over-dense stands throughout the Project area are more susceptible to insect- and disease-related outbreaks, especially during periods of extended drought leading to high levels of tree mortality and overall poor forest health.

The focus will be on thinning to remove surface and ladder fuels, and small trees (up to 16 inches diameter at breast height (DBH)), which will be mechanically thinned, masticated, grapple or tractor piled, and/or manually cut, and piled for later burning or other disposal. Trees up to 30 inches DBH may be removed in certain circumstances where a 16-inch diameter limit would not adequately reduce flame lengths to desired conditions in the WUI Threat and Defense zones. Contractors will use mechanical mastication with ground-based, low-pressure, tracked equipment on slopes up to 50

percent (depending on suitable soils). When hand thinning, contractors will construct compact hand piles that are covered for efficient burning in suitable weather windows. Mechanical thinning will be used to remove excess biomass on a limited scale in areas where mechanical thinning, decking, and road access for transportation are feasible. The Project planning area encompasses a total of 1,080 acres, 950 acres of which have been identified for treatment within the WUI Defense and Threat zones. Funding from the SNC will support 764 acres of the highest priority hazardous fuel reduction.

The NFF was created by Congress to support the conservation and public enjoyment of National Forest lands. Through its Sierra Nevada Program, it has secured over \$200 million from both private and public funds between 2020 - 2023. The NFF has two large active grants underway with the SNC on the TNF: SNC grant #1322 Michigan Bluff for \$3 million and SNC grant #1401 Nyack for \$2 million.

The Project is part of a larger 10-year Vegetation Management Plan co-developed by the Middle Truckee River Watershed Forest Partnership with a goal to treat up to 50,000 acres across the 315,000-acre watershed, with this Project as a top-tier priority for forest health and community protection. The Truckee Ranger District will contribute \$12,000 in-kind staff to project implementation. A wildfire in this area would threaten private property, including single-family homes, condominium and apartment complexes, business complexes, restaurants, and a major ski resort. The planned treatments would provide direct protection for 653 habitable structures/units that are immediately within the community of Alpine Meadows and significantly mitigate risk for roughly 1,600 habitable structures/units in Olympic Valley.

A wildfire in this area would threaten private property, including single-family homes, condominium and apartment complexes, business complexes, restaurants, and a major ski resort. The Project supports SNC's Watershed Improvement Program by improving forest health and community resilience and protecting recreation economies.

Project Schedule

Project Tasks and Deliverables	Timeline
Project Management	July 2024 – December 2027
Implementation Layout	August 2024 – November 2024
Implementation Oversight	May 2025 – December 2027
Fuels-Reduction Treatments	May 2025 – December 2027
Hauling of Fuel Wood to the Washoe Tribe	May 2025 – December 2027

Project Tasks and Deliverables	Timeline
Progress Reports (every six months)	February 1, 2025 – February 1, 2028
Final Report	February 15, 2028
Estimated Project Completion Date	January 1, 2028

Project Costs

Project Costs	SNC Funding
Project Management (Including Travel)	\$127,400
Forestry Layout and Oversight	\$125,380
Implementation – Mechanical Thinning, Mastication, Hand Thinning and Piling	\$1,858,318
Loading and Hauling of Material to Washoe Wood Yard	\$18,900
Administrative Costs	\$319,500
Total	\$2,449,498

Project Letters of Support or Opposition

Support:

- Tahoe National Forest, Supervisor’s Office
- County of Placer, Agriculture, Parks & Natural Resources – Forest Health Division
- Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California
- Alpine Meadows Fire Safe Council
- Middle Truckee River Watershed Forest Partnership
- Tahoe Truckee Community Foundation

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.

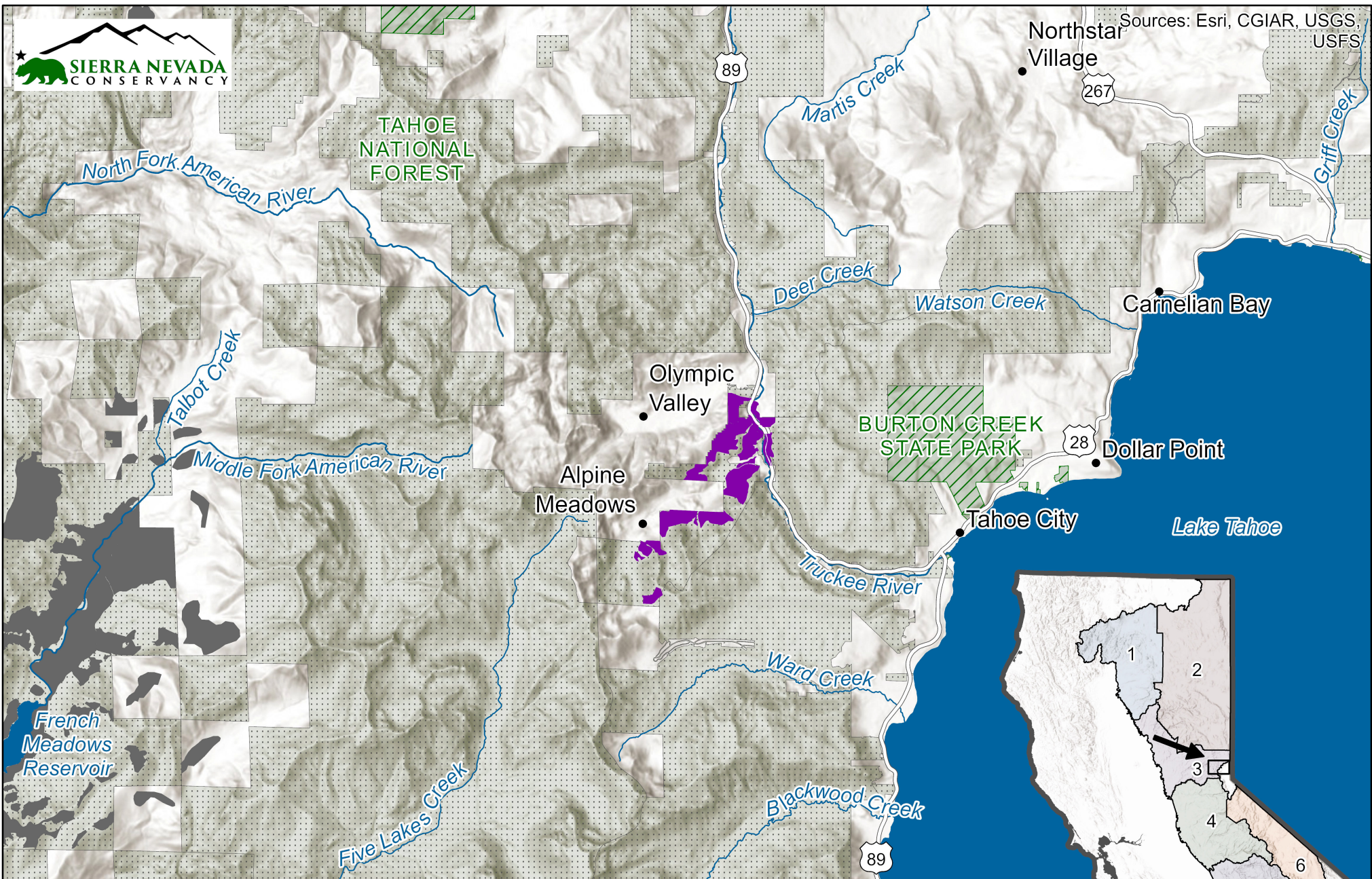
Sierra Nevada Conservancy

Agenda Item 7: Wildfire Recovery and Forest Resilience Directed Grant Program

SNC Project Number 1692 – Amendment

Exhibit A - Page 4

- Acres of Land Improved or Restored

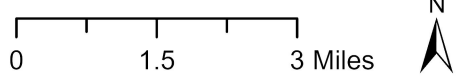


Sources: Esri, CGIAR, USGS, USFS






1692: Alpine Meadows and Olympic Valley Fire Protection Project

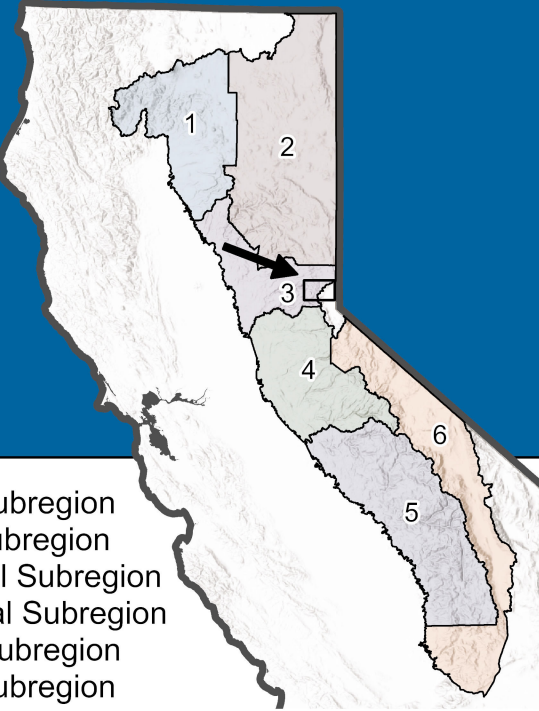
National Forest Foundation

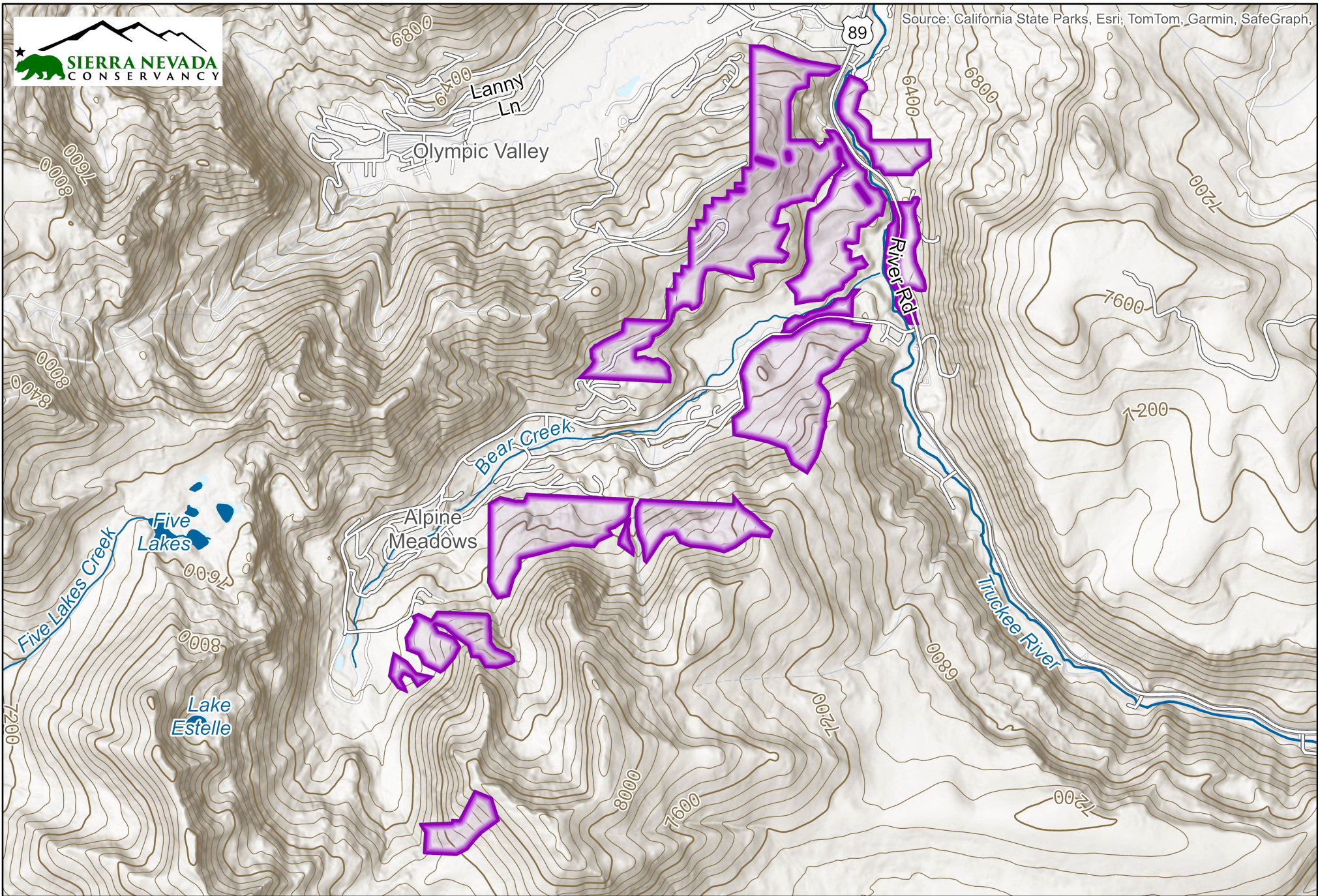


 Project Area

-  Other SNC Implementation Projects
-  State Parks
-  US Forest Service

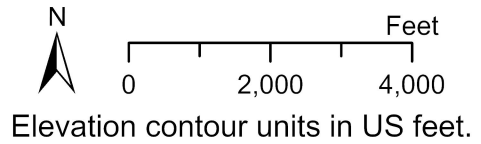
1. Northwest Subregion
2. Northeast Subregion
3. North Central Subregion
4. South Central Subregion
5. Southwest Subregion
6. Southeast Subregion





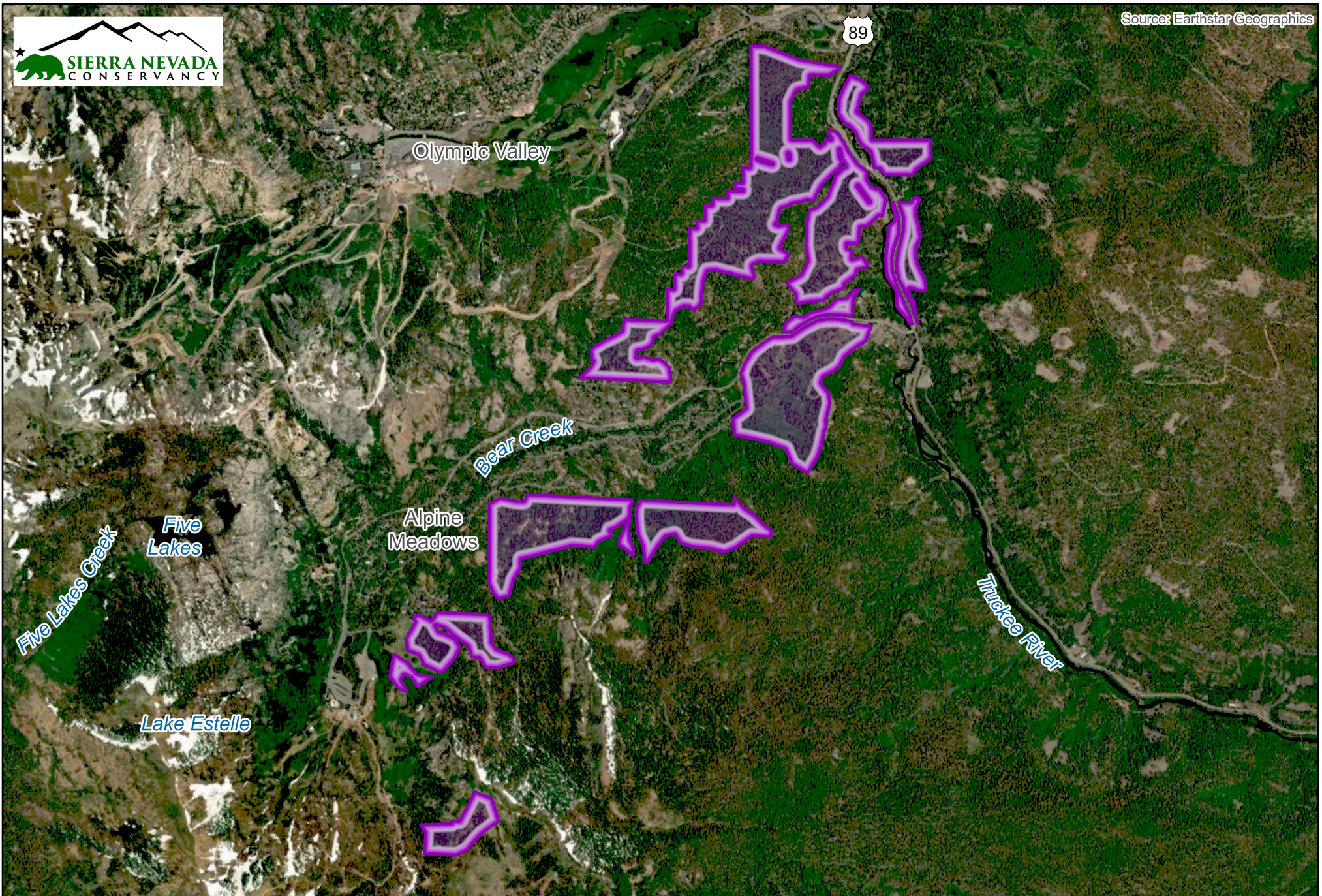
1692: Alpine Meadows and Olympic Valley Fire Protection Project
National Forest Foundation

 Project Area



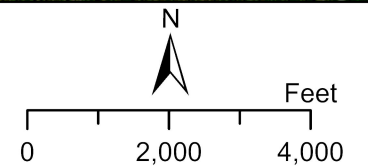


Source: Earthstar Geographics



1692: Alpine Meadows and Olympic Valley Fire Protection Project
National Forest Foundation

 Project Area



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

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

To: Placer County Clerk-Recorder
3715 Atherton Road
Rocklin, CA 95765

Project Title: Alpine Meadows and Olympic Valley Fire Protection Project (SNC 1692.1)

Project Location – Specific: T15N, R16E, Sections 3, 4, 8, and 9; T16N, R16E, Sections 28, 33, and 34.

Project Location - City: Alpine Meadows and the unincorporated community of Olympic Valley

Project Location - County: Placer

Description of Nature, Purpose, and Beneficiaries of Project:

The Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) would amend grant agreement 1692.1 to update the project description with respect to thinning to include that thinning would also focus on live trees up to 30 inches diameter at breast height and may be removed in limited circumstances where both the following conditions occur: 1) the larger diameter material is located in an area that is accessible by mechanical equipment, and 2) where a 16-inch diameter limited would not adequately reduce flame lengths to desired conditions in the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) Threat and Defense zones. This project provides funding to the National Forest Foundation to partner with the Tahoe National Forest to mitigate wildfire risk for the communities of Alpine Meadows and Olympic Valley through active forest management in the Tahoe National Forest. As stated in the previously filed NOE, this project would reduce wildfire risk on up to 1,080 acres of federal land near important ingress and egress routes, private property, and valuable public infrastructure. Expected outcomes from the project are to reduce fuels in the WUI Defense and WUI Threat Zones so that these zones can be used for wildfire suppression and control; allow for safe ingress and egress by first responders and the public in the event of a wildfire or during an emergency evacuation; improve overall forest health and resilience; and protect important upland water resources. Proposed treatment methods include mastication, mechanical thinning, hand thinning, and biomass removal.

Name of Public Agency Approving Project: Sierra Nevada Conservancy

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

National Forest Foundation
Dan Alvey, California Program Manager
10599 Martis Drive, Truckee, CA 96161

Exempt Status:

Statutory Exemption: Public Resources Code Section 4799.05(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 reduce forest fuels within the Tahoe National Forest. The proposed activities were reviewed in their entirety pursuant to NEPA in a Categorical Exclusion (2024) under the "Wildfire Resilience" category within HFRA Section 605(c)(2)(c). The Alpine Meadows and Olympic Valley Fire Protection Project Decision Memo was signed on March 8, 2024.

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

Date received for filing at OPR: _____

Authority cited: Sections 21083 and 21110, Public Resources Code.

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

**Sierra Nevada Conservancy
September 5, 2024**

**Agenda Item 8: Regional Forest and Fire Capacity
Program CEQA Determination and Award
Recommendation**

Background

In March 2019, the Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) Governing Board approved receipt of an initial block grant of \$1.9 million from the California Department of Conservation's (DOC) Regional Forest and Fire Capacity Program (RFFCP). 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 SNC is distributing this funding directly to partners through subgrants and providing region-wide technical assistance to meet the goals of the program.

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. Building the capacity of tribes in the SNC Region and supporting tribal engagement and leadership in forest and watershed restoration are key goals of both the SNC's five-year Strategic Plan and the RFFCP.

Current Status

Under the Governing Board's authorization, given when the Board approved the third block grant in December 2022, staff has been advancing RFFCP goals in the SNC Region on behalf of the DOC and in compliance with the DOC 2022 Grant Guidelines for the RFFCP. The SNC's implementation of the most recent block grant includes investments in capacity-building support, project-development support, tribal-capacity building, and SNC Regional support. These investments are grounded in both the on-the-ground expertise of our Partnerships and Community Support Team and Area Representatives, as well as thorough assessments of area partners to understand their specific needs and how they align with SNC's RFFCP deliverables and DOC's Grant Guidelines.

Per the delegated authority given by the Governing Board to the Executive Officer in December 2022, the Executive Officer has approved and executed 22 subgrants for capacity-building and project-development activities for a total of \$7 million as of July 2024, under the third block grant. As the SNC determined these projects were all exempt from the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the Executive Officer authorized the filing of Notices of Exemption for these awards.

The SNC received a proposal from the California Heritage: Indigenous Research Project (CHIRP) for the 1722-RFFCP (RFFCP2022) WIP Capacity Subgrant – CHIRP Nisenan, which would utilize Nisenan traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) forest-management practices to restore culturally important species, reduce hazardous fuels, return cultural burning, and plant native species on approximately 10 acres of a CHIRP-owned property closely associated with the Nisenan tribe located just outside Nevada City. This project is part of a larger effort to adopt restoration-, conservation-, and education-based management plans for the 32-acre property and will provide an opportunity for knowledge transfer and TEK practice for Nisenan tribal members. The management plans for the overall property include construction of approximately 3,700 feet of trail, installation of interpretive signage, fencing, retaining walls, a well and water storage tank, a native plant garden with irrigation, as well as removal of non-native, invasive plant species and fuel reduction and the return of cultural burning throughout the subject parcel. Nevada County completed an Initial Study, adopted a Mitigated Negative Declaration for the Management Plans, and approved the project in March of 2023, of which this smaller project is included.

Nevada County is the lead agency under CEQA for the Deer Creek Tribute Trail Extension and Nisenan Cultural Reclamation Corridor Enhancement Project (DCTT), of which SNC's proposed project is part of. The SNC has determined that, acting as a responsible agency under CEQA, it may rely on Nevada County's Mitigated Negative Declaration for its determination. The SNC is relying on the Mitigated Negative Declaration, rather than an exemption under CEQA, therefore the proposed project is being presented for Governing Board's consideration and determination, As was presented by SNC staff to the Board on December 9, 2022: "Any grants requiring CEQA environmental review and documentation beyond a Categorical Exemption would be brought to the Board for authorization." (December 9, 2022, Board Meeting, Staff Report, Agenda Item 12: Regional Forest and Fire Capacity Program Grant.) Thus, this RFFCP project is an exception to the norm. The SNC staff is recommending the Board review and consider the information in Nevada County's DCTT Extension Initial Study and Mitigated Negative Declaration and concur with the findings that support a grant to CHIRP for 1722-RFFCP (RFFCP2022) WIP Capacity Subgrant – CHIRP Nisenan. Further, SNC staff is recommending the Board authorize the Executive Officer to file an Notice of Determination as Responsible Agency under CEQA and authorize the staff to enter into agreements necessary for project implementation.

a. Project #1722-RFFCP

(RFFCP2022) WIP Capacity Subgrant - CHIRP Nisenan

California Heritage: Indigenous Research Project (CHIRP)

\$250,000

Nevada County

1722-RFFCP (RFFCP 2022) WIP Capacity Subgrant – CHIRP Nisenan is a RFFCP capacity-building project to support tribal stewardship development in the form of returning cultural burning and native plant restoration on newly rematriated lands near Nevada City. Funds will be used to develop a TEK Cultural Restoration and Monitoring Plan, support partnership building and TEK knowledge sharing, pre-burn area preparations, hire subcontractors (preferably tribal crews) as necessary, and provide stipends to compensate tribal members for their time and participation in the burn, as well as invasive plant removal and native plantings. These activities of returning beneficial fire to the landscape will reduce dangerous fuel loads, improve forest health, and support the Nevada City Rancheria Nisenan in beginning to restore, regain, and put into practice its role as first stewards.

CEQA Compliance: Nevada County, as Lead Agency under CEQA, prepared, certified, and adopted in March 2023 an Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration (IS/MND) and Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (MMRP) and approved associated management plans for the DCTT. Before reaching a decision on the project, the SNC Governing Board must consider the environmental effects of the project. (Cal. Code Regs., tit. 14, § 15096, subd. (f).)

Prior to approving the project, the SNC Governing Board must certify that it independently reviewed and considered the information in the IS/MND. (Cal. Code Regs., tit. 14, §15050, subd. (b).)

The SNC is not proposing to add mitigation measures as conditions of approval. Thus, no additional mitigation monitoring and reporting plan is required to be adopted by the Board prior to its decision on the project.

The SNC may file a Notice of Determination as a Responsible Agency on the IS/MND

[Access the IS/MND, Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program, and associated Lead Agency documents.](#)

[Access the Project Details and the Notice of Determination \(Project # 1722-RFFCP \(RFFCP2022\) WIP Capacity Subgrant – CHIRP Nisenan\)](#)

Next Steps

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

Recommendation

Staff recommends the Board:

- a. Certify that it independently reviewed and considered the information in the DCTT Initial Study and Mitigated Negative Declaration (2023) and accompanying Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program; and if the Board concurs with the DCTT Initial Study and Mitigated Negative Declaration and MMRP, authorize the Executive Officer to file a Notice of Determination as a responsible agency for the 1722-RFFCP (RFFCP2022) WIP Capacity Subgrant – CHIRP Nisenan project, approve a grant award in the amount of \$250,000 to the California Heritage: Indigenous Research Project, and authorize staff to enter into agreements necessary for project implementation.**

Exhibit A

Sierra Nevada Conservancy Regional Forest and Fire Capacity Program SNC Project Number 1722-RFFCP

SNC ID Number: 1722-RFFCP

Applicant: California Heritage: Indigenous Research Project (CHIRP), Nevada City Rancheria Nisenan Tribe

Grant Title: (RFFCP2022) WIP Capacity Subgrant – CHIRP Nisenan

Project Title: Deer Creek Tribute Trail Extension and Nisenan Cultural Reclamation Corridor Enhancement Project

SNC Subregion: North Central

County: Nevada County

Total Subgrant Cost: \$250,000

Funding Authority: Regional Forest and Fire Capacity block grant awarded to SNC from Department of Conservation

Project Scope / Description

The California Heritage: Indigenous Research Project (CHIRP) is a tribal nonprofit entity that owns 32 acres of land near the western edge of Nevada City in Nevada County. The 1722-RFFCP (RFFCP2022) WIP Capacity Subgrant – CHIRP Nisenan project will utilize Nisenan traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) forest-management practices to restore culturally important species and complete fuels-reduction work on 10 acres of this property. Funding provided by the Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) will support partnership development, training, and knowledge transfer through the completion of planning, permitting, site preparation, and implementation of a cultural burn, and replanting post-burn on the property. The property is along Deer Creek and is characterized by thick fuels within the Wildland Urban Interface. The project will result in reduced wildfire risk, restoration of culturally important species, and a trained tribal workforce.

The primary goal is to provide Nisenan tribal members an opportunity for hands-on-learning and knowledge transfer through the design and completion of cultural burns. The CHIRP will identify a TEK cultural burning team and develop a TEK restoration and monitoring plan, which will include an assessment of the site to identify culturally important species and potential locations to restore them. The CHIRP will also assess the sites within the property where the land would most benefit from cultural-burning treatments, secure necessary burn permits, and conduct and monitor cultural-burn treatments. Site preparation for the cultural burns will include initial clearing, limbing,

Sierra Nevada Conservancy

Agenda Item 8: Regional Forest and Fire Capacity Program CEQA Determination and Award Recommendation

SNC Project Number 1722-RFFCP

Exhibit A - Page 2

non-native species removal, chipping, and pile burning. Replanting of culturally and ecologically important native species will occur post-burn.

The tribal capacity building and knowledge transfer occurring through the demonstration of cultural burns complement the larger Deer Creek Tribute Trail Extension and Nisenan Cultural Reclamation Corridor Enhancement Project (DCTT) in Nevada County. The DCTT will connect two existing trail segments by constructing an extension of the Deer Creek Tribute Trail across the CHIRP property. Vegetation management actions and fuels reduction will occur as part of the trail extension, and the cultural burns and restoration of culturally important species will provide important opportunities for remaining Nisenan tribal members to practice TEK and demonstrate alternative restoration practices.

The CHIRP is a 501(c)(3) organization guided by the Nevada City Rancheria Tribal Council, a non-federally recognized tribe whose previous land allotment and federal status were lost in 1958 with the Rancheria Termination Act. The CHIRP's mission is to preserve, protect, and perpetuate Nisenan Culture. The CHIRP has legal status to serve the tribe until federal recognition may be regained one day, restoring tribal sovereignty and self-governance. When this 32-acre parcel of land along Angkula Seo (Deer Creek) was transferred back to the Nevada City Rancheria Nisenan Tribe in 2018, it dedicated the land to Nisenan cultural revitalization, community education, and restoration of the land and waters. This project will reconnect tribal descendants with their ancestral landscapes by providing an opportunity for Nisenan members, including youth and community allies to reestablish traditional land management, to build forest resiliency on tribal land; bolster tribal cultural resiliency by developing and documenting the use of Nisenan TEK forest-management practices; and increase the pace and scale of forest management in the SNC's Region by sharing these alternative forest-management practices.

The project is supported by Nevada County, the City of Nevada City, Bear Yuba Land Trust, Sierra Streams Institute, The Sierra Fund, South Yuba River Citizens League, the Greater Champion Neighborhood Association (GCNA), GCNA Firewise Community, and others. The CHIRP will seek advisors from other tribes whose practices have not been broken to provide mentorship and guidance. The CHIRP also plans to consult with the Indigenous Peoples Burning Network, which is a support network among Native American communities that are revitalizing traditional fire practices in a contemporary context.

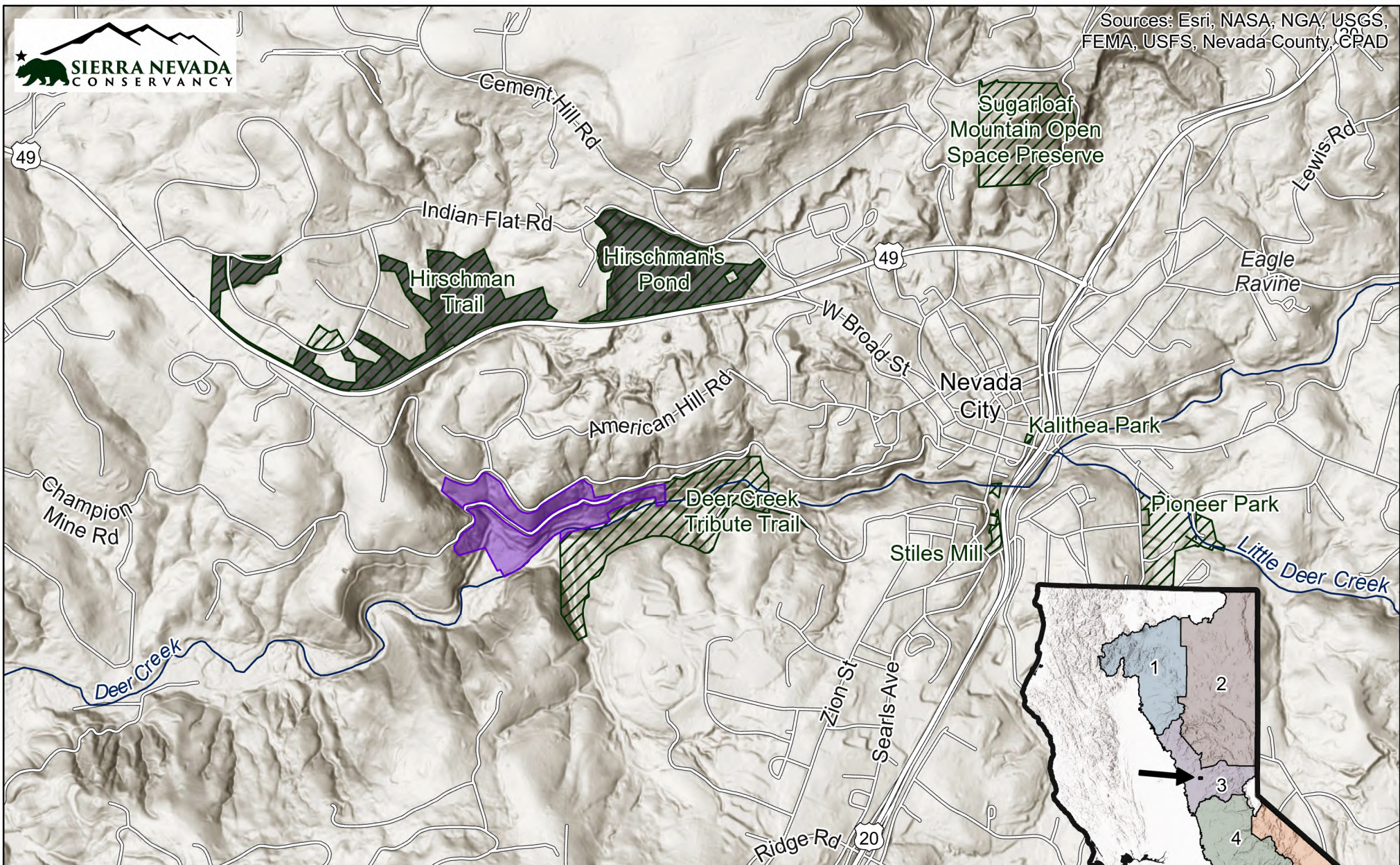
Returning beneficial fire and empowering tribes in land stewardship are key elements of SNC's Strategic Plan. In addition, the RFFCP strives to build capacity, and this demonstration project will do that.

Project Schedule

Project Tasks and Deliverables	Timeline
Identify Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) cultural burning team, draft agreements and launch program	August 2024 - September 30, 2024
Develop TEK Restoration and Monitoring Plan	August 2024 - December 15, 2024
Treatment 1 - Initial clearing, limbing, non-native removal, and pile burning of remnant fire load	December 15, 2025
Treatment 2- Facilitate the transmission of knowledge and partnership building through the development and implementation of TEK Management Practices, conduct and monitor cultural burn treatments	May 31, 2026
Produce a report on strategies developed to sustain the benefit of the capacity-building activities supported by this grant	October 31, 2026
Treatment 3- Implement replanting and tending of culturally important native species	November 30, 2026
SNC quarterly reports	Every quarter
Attend SNC Regional Annual Conference/s (if applicable)	Ongoing
Attend SNC's RFFCP Subgrantee Workshops	
Estimated Project Completion Date	December 31, 2026

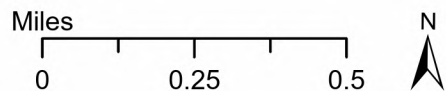
Project Costs

Project Costs	SNC Funding
Personnel Salary/ Benefits	\$105,000
Materials/ Supplies	\$17,800
Subcontracts	\$99,473
Travel	\$5,000
Administrative Costs	\$22,727
Total	\$250,000



1722-RFFCP: (RFFCP2022) WIP Capacity Subgrant – CHIRP Nisenan

California Heritage: Indigenous Research Project (CHIRP),
Nevada City Rancheria Nisenan Tribe

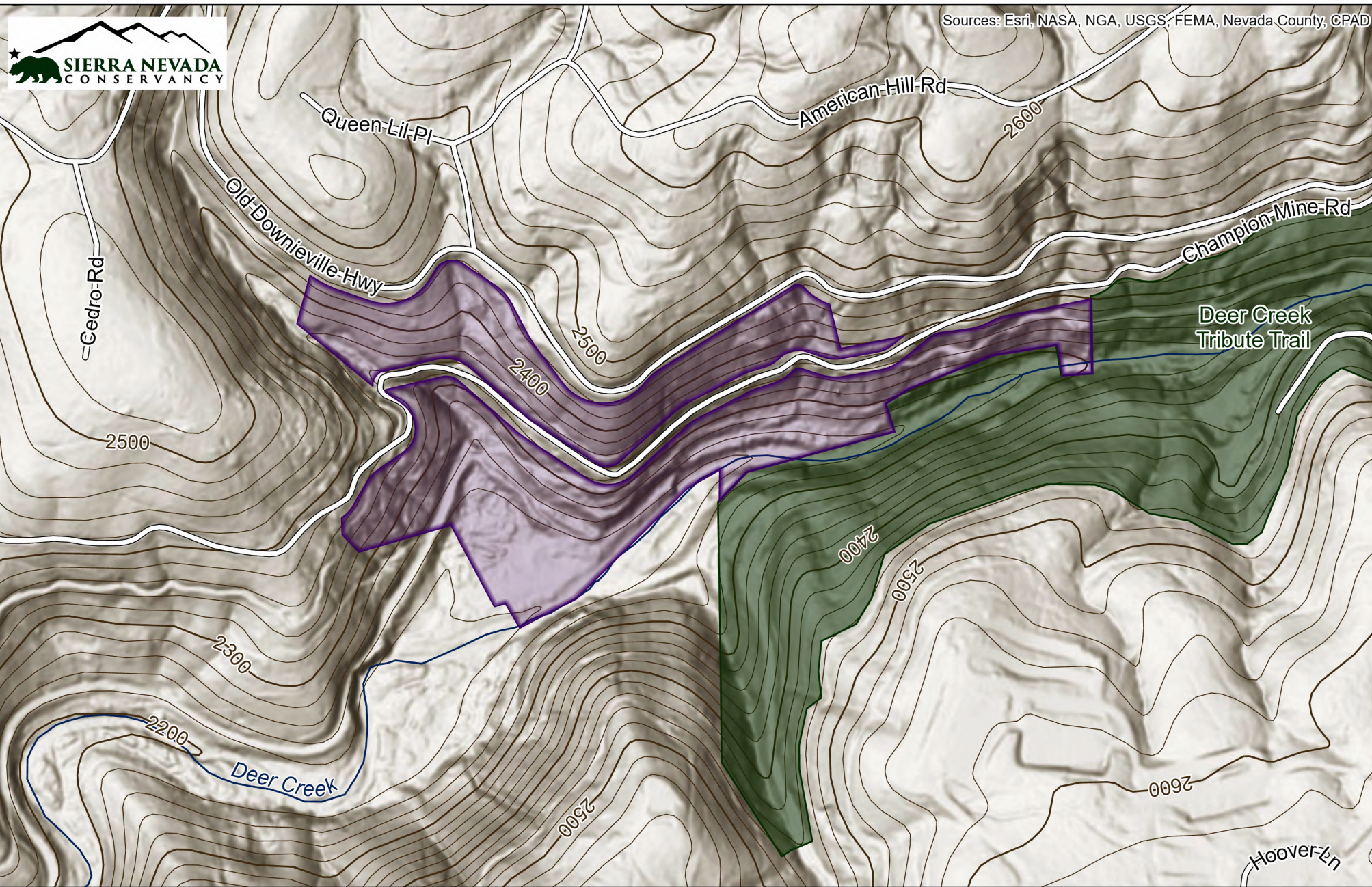


 Project Area


 Nevada City Parks and Recreation


 Other SNC Implementation Projects

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



1722-RFFCP: (RFFCP2022) WIP Capacity
 Subgrant – CHIRP Nisenan
 California Heritage: Indigenous Research Project
 (CHIRP), Nevada City Rancheria Nisenan Tribe

 Project Area

 Nevada City Parks and Recreation

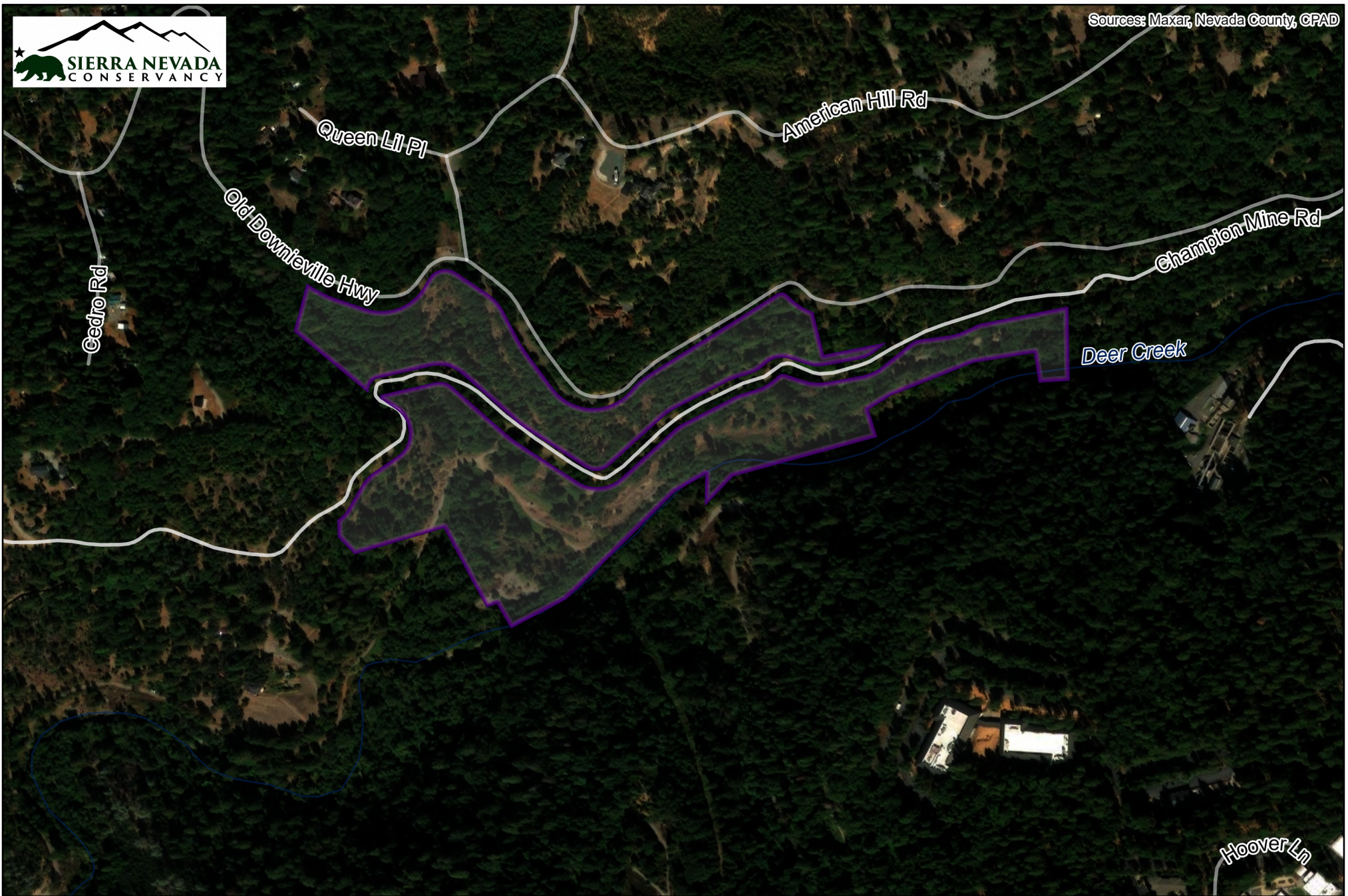
N

0 350 700 Feet

Elevation contour units in US feet.



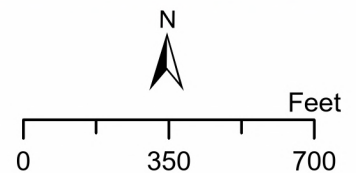
Sources: Maxar, Nevada County, CPAD



1722-RFFCP: (RFFCP2022) WIP Capacity Subgrant – CHIRP Nisenan

California Heritage: Indigenous Research Project (CHIRP), Nevada City Rancheria Nisenan Tribe

 Project Area



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

From:
Public Agency:
Sierra Nevada Conservancy
11521 Blocker Drive, Suite 205
Auburn, CA 95603
Mary Akens
(530) 450-5177

Lead Agency (if different from above):
Nevada County Planning Department
950 Maidu Avenue, Ste 170
Nevada City, CA 95959-8617
Brian Foss, Planning Director
(530) 265-1222

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): 2023010202

Project Title: WIP Capacity Subgrant – CHIRP Nisenan (SNC 1722RFFCP)

Project Applicant: California Heritage: Indigenous Research Project

Project Location (include county): Assessor's Parcel Number 005-101-002 (no situs address) in Nevada City, CA, accessed via Old Downieville Highway. Approximately one mile southwest of the Highway 49 and Highway 20 intersection in Nevada City.

Project Description: The Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) would provide funding to the California Heritage: Indigenous Research Project (CHIRP) to utilize Nisenan traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) forest-management practices to restore culturally important species, reduce hazardous fuels, return cultural burning, and plant native species on approximately 10 acres of a CHIRP-owned property closely associated with the Nisenan tribe located just outside Nevada City. This project is part of a larger effort to adopt restoration-, conservation-, and education-based management plans for the 32-acre property and will provide an opportunity for knowledge transfer and TEK practice for Nisenan tribal members. The management plans for the overall property include construction of approximately 3,700 feet of trail, installation of interpretive signage, fencing, retaining walls, a well and water storage tank, a native plant garden with irrigation, as well as removal of non-native, invasive plant species, fuel reduction, and the return of cultural burning throughout the subject parcel. Funds will be used to develop a TEK Cultural Restoration and Monitoring Plan, support partnership building and TEK knowledge sharing, prepare pre-burn areas, hire subcontractors (preferably tribal crews) as necessary, and provide stipends to compensate tribal members for their time and participation in the burn, as well as invasive plant removal and native plantings.

This is to advise that the **Sierra Nevada Conservancy (Responsible Agency)** has approved the above-described project on **September 5, 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:

Nevada County Planning Department, 950 Maidu Avenue, Suite 170, Nevada City, CA 95959

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

Sierra Nevada Conservancy
September 5, 2024

Agenda Item 9: Boundary Expansion Geography Overview

Background

Chapter 182, Statutes of 2021 (Senate Bill 208) amended Public Resources Code, section 33302 and added parts of Shasta County, Trinity County, and Siskiyou County to the Sierra Nevada Conservancy's (SNC) defined Region. The addition of 490,094 acres of Shasta County, 117,248 acres of Trinity County, and 733,266 acres of Siskiyou County brings the total size of the Region to 26,937,668 acres. The addition of Siskiyou and Trinity counties increased the number of counties in the Region from all or part of 22 counties to all or part of 24 counties.

The expansion area includes the McCloud River, Upper Sacramento River, and Upper Trinity River watersheds, placing all the upper forested watersheds that feed the California State Water Project and the federal Central Valley Project within SNC's Region. The law expanded the SNC boundary to include the Sacramento River's primary headwaters and allows management and restoration in these watersheds to be supported through the SNC and the Sierra Nevada Watershed Improvement Program.

The 1.3-million-acre expansion area is characterized by unique geography ranging from foothill pine and chaparral around Shasta Lake at 1,000 ft above sea level to the sub-alpine and alpine regions of the Trinity Alps and Mt. Shasta at 14,179 ft. above sea level. Except for the Interstate 5 corridor, the region is sparsely populated and hard to access, but boasts diverse botanical and ecological diversity and value. The region sits at the intersection of the Klamath Mountains, Cascade Mountains, High Desert, and Sierra Nevada. This area is largely characterized by mixed-conifer forests, fens, wet meadows, springs, alpine lakes, and the headwaters of the McCloud, Sacramento, and Trinity rivers.

The land ownership matrix is complex with a highly checkerboarded pattern, a relic of railroad-land grants. The area has a history of resource extraction since gold was discovered in the region in the late 1800s. The expansion area is the ancestral lands of the Wintu, Shasta, and Achomawi people who have stewarded the lands since time immemorial.

Current Status

Since January 1, 2022, SNC staff has extended programmatic support into the new boundary area and developed relationships with key stakeholders and local representatives, including, but not limited to, engaging in the following activities:

- Executive and Field Operations & Grants teams presenting to the Shasta, Siskiyou, and Trinity County Board of Supervisors.

- Executive and Field Operations & Grants teams working closely with Shasta-Trinity National Forest Supervisor and staff and other public and private land and resource managers.
- The SNC awarding grant funds totaling \$17,883,925 from seven grant programs.

Next Steps

The SNC's governing statutes identify 10 areas of work the SNC can contribute to (Public Resources Code, section 33301, subdivision (d)(1)-(10).) The SNC staff will continue to expand service and support to the new boundary area and build relationships with local governments, private businesses, nonprofit organizations, tribal entities, federal agencies, other California state governmental entities, and the public.

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
September 5, 2024

Agenda Item 10: Regional Priority Plan Update

Background

The Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) is a block grant recipient under the Department of Conservation's (DOC) Regional Forest and Fire Capacity Program (RFFCP). The Regional Priority Plan (RPP) is a deliverable required by the RFFCP. The RPPs are meant to be accessible, spatial representations of on-the-ground needs and vulnerabilities and to provide information about the partnerships and projects intended to address those needs.

RPPs must include three elements:

- **Geography and Governance:** The key geographic characteristics and governing structures that, together, determine the landscape of focus for a given organization, tribe, or partnership.
- **Assessment and Methodology:** The data and processes used by partners, tribes, landowners, managers, and other stakeholders to identify and develop priority projects.
- **Landscape Portfolios:** The collection of priority projects, strategically developed to enhance resilience and meet partner objectives.

The RPPs submitted by the SNC and other RFFCP grantees will be used, collectively, to help the Wildfire and Forest Resilience Task Force, state agencies, and policymakers understand landscape needs and project and partnership readiness across the state. The RPPs will also inform funding and policy decisions.

Current Status

The SNC is in the process of developing its RPP as a web-based platform that will provide information about focal landscapes and affiliated partnerships within the SNC Region. This platform will allow users to access information both about the project portfolios that have been developed for a given landscape, and information about the partnerships, tribes, and organizations helping to identify, plan, and implement those projects. Users will be able to overlay partnership and project information with data that illustrates the condition and characteristics of landscapes within the SNC Region.

Ultimately, the RPP will show where landscapes and partnerships are ready for landscape-scale investment, depict where ecological hotspots align with ready partners, and identify gaps in capacity across the SNC Region. In addition to informing state-level funding and policy, the RPP will also inform SNC internal operations by helping staff better understand resource and capacity needs across the SNC Region.

A presentation will be provided to the Governing Board at this meeting with more detail on SNC's RPP, including an updated prototype web map.

Next Steps

The SNC staff is in the process of developing its RPP, working closely with DOC staff to ensure SNC's product meets deliverable requirements.

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.

Agenda Item 11: California Jobs First Program Update

Background

California Jobs First (CA Jobs First), formerly the Community Economic Resilience Fund, or CERF, is an economic development planning and implementation program administered jointly by the California Labor Workforce Development Agency (LWDA), the Governor's Office of Business and Economic Development (GoBiz), and the Governor's Office of Planning and Research (OPR). The \$600 million program is meant to catalyze regional planning and investment, promote access by historically disinvested communities, and create high-quality jobs that address climate resilience.

The state has been divided into 13 CA Jobs First regions. Four of these regions overlap with the larger SNC Region. Each CA Jobs First region has its own convener, which received a grant of \$5 million for planning and partnership development. Responsibilities of the convener have included:

- Convening a governance structure, the 'High Road Transition Collaboratives'
- Creating a two-stage economic development plan, which includes a regional assessment and a regional strategy
- Administering a \$14 million Catalyst Fund grant program to provide funding for priority local projects, targeting feasibility studies and "last mile" funding for projects, which are underway but do not have all the funding needed for completion
- Identifying local industrial clusters as the focus for an upcoming \$273 million state-wide implementation grant program, which will target ready-to-launch projects in alignment with the regional economic development strategies

Staff has been tracking the progress of planning and partnership development in the four regions that overlap with the larger SNC Region in anticipation of the priority local projects and regional strategies that may align with SNC's mission.

Current Status

The CA Jobs First regions have already developed their governance structures and completed their Stage 1 plan: the regional assessment. They have also solicited applications for the Catalyst Fund and are evaluating them and completing their regional strategy documents.

The SNC staff has engaged in the CA Jobs First efforts throughout the SNC Region at the request of the convenors. The SNC's involvement allows SNC to share its knowledge and experience in the areas of ecosystem restoration, sustainable recreation, and biomass utilization. The SNC is also positioned to create connections between this effort and other state planning efforts, including the California Wildfire and

Forest Resilience Action Plan. The significant overlap between the individual regional plans and the California Wildfire and Forest Resilience Action Plan's strategies brings a potential for effective coordination and resource leverage.

Next Steps

The SNC staff will continue to engage as requested with the regional High Road Transition Collaboratives and will watch for potential alignment between CA Jobs First strategies and SNC programs.

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
September 5, 2024**

Key Meetings and Presentations

June – August 2024

June 20 – Roundhouse Council Ribbon Cutting Ceremony: Executive Officer Angela Avery and Area Representative Kristy Hoffman attended this event commemorating the final stages of the Roundhouse Council Indian Education Center rebuild in Greenville, CA. The center hosts an afterschool program for native youth and serves as a resource center for the Indian Valley.

June 20 – Black Conservation Week Legislative Tour: Policy & Outreach Division Chief Brittany Covich attended a tour of the 650-acre property near Emigrant Gap, CA acquired by 40 Acre Conservation League with the support of a grant from the Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) and other funders. The tour focused on Black-owned land and forest stewardship, threatened species, water resources, and plans for public access and wildfire prevention. It was hosted by an honorary legislative committee, including Assemblymembers Mike Gipson, Chris Holden, Corey Jackson, Blanca Rubio, Carlos Villapudua, and Miguel Santiago.

June 26 – Biomass Supply Symposium: Executive Officer Angela Avery and Policy & Outreach Division Chief Brittany Covich attended this presentation hosted by Placer County Water Agency in Roseville, CA. The one-day event consisted of various panel presentations regarding biomass sources, collection efforts, business innovation, utilization technology, and future possibilities with a particular focus on the context of Placer, El Dorado, and Nevada counties. Policy Analyst Emily Blackmer represented the SNC on a panel regarding state agency involvement in biomass work. Director of the Forest Resilience Task Force Patrick Wright gave the keynote speech.

July 12 - CA Wildfire & Forest Resilience Task Force Meeting: Executive Officer Angela Avery and Policy & Outreach Division Chief Brittany Covich attended this meeting at the California Natural Resources Agency building in Sacramento. Brittany participated in a panel discussion regarding regional approaches to aligning and coordinating state, federal, and private funding to better support regional priority needs and increase program sustainability.

July 16 – California State Leadership Summit: Executive Officer Angela Avery and Acting Chief Deputy Executive Officer Amy Lussier attended this meeting at the May Lee Business Complex Auditorium in Sacramento. The event was designed to encourage, empower, and align state executive leadership to ensure timely and effective government operations and service delivery to all Californians.

July 24-25 – Water Education Foundation Headwaters Tour: Policy & Outreach Division Chief Brittany Covich spoke during this two-day, one-night tour. State, federal,

and local water agency staff participants traveled through the Sierra foothills, into the mountains, and around the Lake Tahoe Basin to explore the impact of fires on California water supply and quality in the American and Yuba watersheds, as well as forest management, tree mortality, meadow restoration, and climate change. Tour stops included the Yuba and American rivers, Tahoe and Eldorado national forests, meadow- and river-restoration sites, and Lake Tahoe.

August 2 – Donner Summit Field Tour: The SNC, alongside project partners from Truckee Donner Land Trust and the South Yuba River Citizens League, hosted a legislative field tour of forest- and watershed-health projects on Donner Summit. The one-day tour offered an opportunity to see nature-based climate solutions first-hand and to learn how interconnected projects can produce wide-ranging benefits for landscapes, communities, and critical natural resources. Participants included Joseph Encinas, Executive Assistant for Senator Dahle; Taylor Brown, Legislative Aide for Senator Dahle; Yolanda Cookson, District Rep for Assemblymember Dahle; Emily DeWolfe, Office Assistant for Senator Alvarado-Gil; Elena Pieri, Natural Resources Consultant for Speaker Rivas; Trevor Taylor, Legislative Director for Senator Gonzalez; California Natural Resources Agency Deputy Secretary of Forest and Wildfire Resilience and SNC governing Boardmember, Lisa Lien-Mager; Deputy Secretary for Access, Gloria Sandoval; and staff from the Department of Finance. Executive Officer Angela Avery, Acting Chief Deputy Executive Officer Amy Lussier, and SNC Policy & Communications staff also participated in the tour.

August 9 – Tahoe Central Sierra Initiative Meeting (TCSI): Executive Officer Angela Avery attended this meeting at SNC Headquarters in Auburn, CA. Participants discussed progress on the TCSI implementation plan and project tracker, as well as recommendations from the Outreach & Communications workgroup.

August 12 – Prescribed Fire Stakeholder Meeting - Liability Claims Fund Pilot & Private Insurance Solution: Executive Officer Angela Avery and Policy & Outreach Division Chief Brittany Covich attended this stakeholder gathering hosted by California Forestry Association (Calforests) at its headquarters in Sacramento. Calforests discussed the development of an insurance solution for Registered Professional Foresters, Licensed Timber Operators, Certified Burn Bosses, and Cultural Fire Practitioners and landowners. Calforests CEO, Matt Dias, Central Coast Prescribed Burn Association member, William Dessert, and Arroyo Insurance Services are working to distribute a combined coverage policy form of General Liability, Contractors Pollution Liability, and Professional (E&O) Liability that would allow for 1000+ certified and licensed professionals along with private, public, NGO and tribal lands to practice their scope of work while using beneficial fire practices. They used this time to gather stakeholder feedback, which will inform the development of this insurance product, an opportunity made possible by the Prescribed Fire Liability Claims Fund.

**Sierra Nevada Conservancy
September 4 & 5, 2024**

Letters of Support

June 2024 - August 2024



11521 Blocker Drive, Ste. 205
Auburn, CA 95603
phone: (530) 823-4670
sierranevada.ca.gov

July 12, 2024

Blake Gardiner
Program Coordinator
National Fish and Wildlife Foundation

SUBJECT: SIERRA NEVADA CONSERVANCY SUPPORT FOR THE NATIONAL FOREST FOUNDATION'S GRANT APPLICATION

Dear Mr. Gardiner:

As the Executive Officer for the Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC), I am pleased to express the agency's support for the National Forest Foundation's (NFF) grant application to the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation's America the Beautiful Challenge for the implementation of the Eldorado National Forest (ENF) Priority Watersheds: Campground Fuels Reduction, Habitat Improvements, and Tribal Co-Stewardship Project (Project). The SNC sees strong benefits in hazardous fuel reduction, campground improvement, aquatic and wildlife habitat enhancement, and indigenous land management restoration which will be implemented under this Project.

The SNC recognizes that legacy land use practices (e.g., heavy grazing, fire suppression, etc.) in the Union Valley-Silver Creek and Caples Creek drainages have resulted in increased forest stand density, lower fire frequency, and a potential for greater wildfire severity. These conditions have caused significant impacts on the watershed's natural resources, including forests, meadows, and streams, and have led to significant changes in the composition, structure, and overall balance of these important ecological systems. The Project, proposed by the NFF and the ENF, will help address hazardous fuel loading within campgrounds and day use areas where human-caused wildfire ignitions during dry seasons are more likely to start. The Project will also address diminished aquatic passages and wildlife corridors to improve the habitat of important aquatic and riparian species. Restoring these passages and corridors will help protect biodiversity and ensure a functioning diverse ecosystem within these important watersheds. Finally, the Project will emphasize indigenous knowledge and tribal co-stewardship to restore culturally important sites and minimize disturbance by invasive plants. This collaboration will further engage local tribes in culturally significant and



ecologically important restoration activities within their ancestral homelands on the Eldorado National Forest. Furthermore, this project aligns closely with two of four Regional goals in SNC's 2024 to 2029 Strategic Plan: (1) Promoting Healthy Forests and Watersheds and (2) Supporting Sustainable Recreation and Tourism and Equitable Outdoor Access.

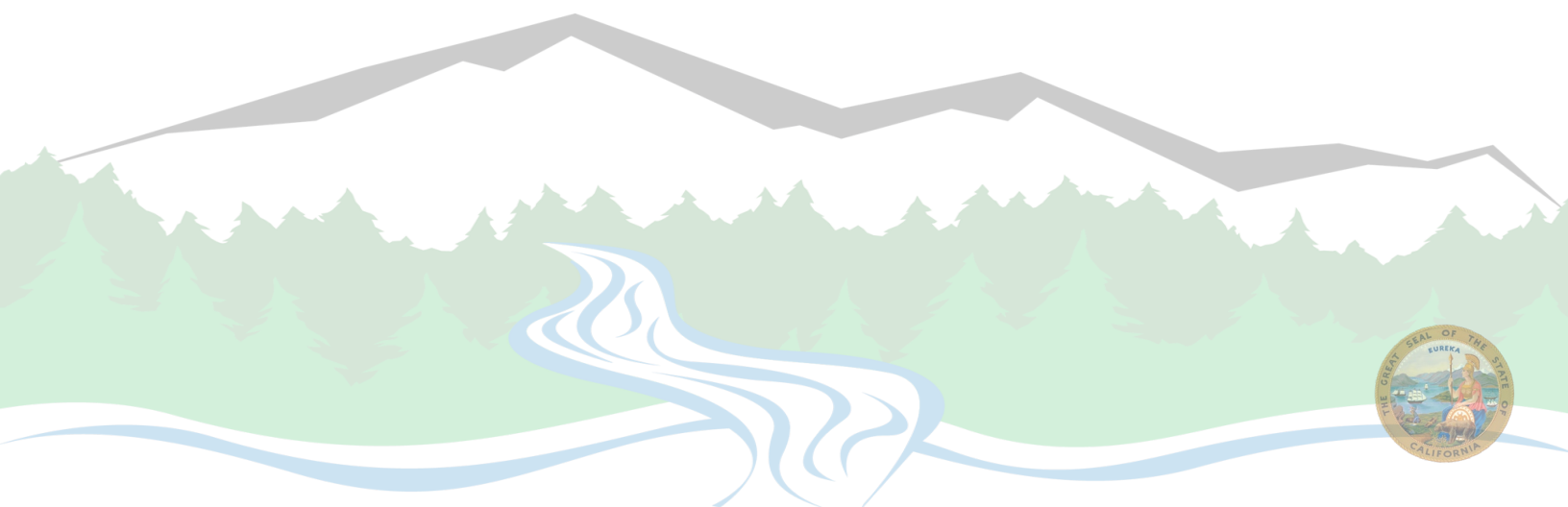
The SNC strongly supports NFF's proposal for the ENF Priority Watersheds: Campground Fuels Reduction, Habitat Improvements, and Tribal Co-Stewardship Project and urges the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation to fund this important implementation work.

Sincerely,



Angela Avery

Executive Officer





11521 Blocker Drive, Ste. 205
Auburn, CA 95603
phone: (530) 823-4670
sierranevada.ca.gov

July 23, 2024

Blake Gardiner
Program Coordinator
National Fish and Wildlife Foundation

SUBJECT: SUPPORT FOR PROJECT ENGEMAN CAMPTONVILLE GREEN ENERGY PROJECT

Dear Yuba Water Agency Board of Directors:

The Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) is pleased to submit this letter of support for the Engeman Camptonville Green Energy Project (Project). This Project has obtained both financial and technical assistance from the SNC over its many years of development, based on its beneficial impact on forest and watershed health, as well as the economic benefits to the local communities. It will also significantly benefit the North Yuba Forest Partnership, which the SNC helped initiate and which serves as an innovative and comprehensive demonstration of effective forest collaboration.

The SNC Region needs projects such as this one. Without opportunities for the beneficial use of forest biomass waste, many forest projects will not be implemented. The Project will utilize the waste in a key priority landscape - one of the last remaining watersheds untouched by catastrophic wildfire in the state of California. It is also an important demonstration project for renewable energy technology that meets California's environmental standards. Both the Camptonville Community Partnership and Engeman Energy USA have proven themselves to be reliable and committed partners.

Your financial support for this Project will assist forest and watershed protection in your area and across the state. Thank you for your consideration of this important request.

Sincerely,


Angela Avery
Executive Officer

