

STATE OF CALIFORNIA SIERRA NEVADA CONSERVANCY

Timber Regulation and Forest Restoration Fund

SNC ID Number: TRFRF002

Applicant: Sierra Institute for Community and Environment

Project Title: Building Capacity for Rural Development Across Sierra Communities

SNC Subregion: Region-wide

Funding Amount Requested: \$400,000

Funding Amount Recommended: \$400,000

Total Project Cost: \$400,000

PROJECT SCOPE / DESCRIPTION

The Sierra Institute for the Community and the Environment (Sierra Institute) will build capacity and provide direct technical assistance to rural forested communities working to promote economic development and increase utilization of low-value, small-diameter wood; tackling challenges such as mill site/brownfield identification and redevelopment; business and entrepreneurial development; supply contracts; and more. Redeveloped industrial sites serving a direct local need will improve community vitality across the Sierra, including improved forest and watershed health, job creation, and economic revitalization. This work will lead to a Regional increase in wood-based businesses, job generation, and economic development. Communities which have already expressed an interest in this assistance include Foresthill, Auberry, and Bieber.

Expert advisors and established state agency working groups (Forest Management Task Force, SB859 Working group) will be consulted to assist with this effort, including representatives from relevant agencies and organizations, such as the Center for Creative Land Reuse, the Environmental Protection Agency, Go Biz, the USFS Wood Utilization team, and other partners. Consultations will help direct Sierra Institute to provide program development assistance, identify opportunities and resources, and promote interagency coordination.

The Sierra Institute will then engage interested communities throughout the Region in a capacity and opportunity assessment, identifying opportunities for industrial land redevelopment and assessing local capacity needs and assets. Interested communities will then be offered leadership development and other programs to build the local capacity to engage in economic development and redevelopment efforts. The Sierra Institute and partners will provide technical assistance and support throughout the redevelopment process tailored to individual community needs. In addition, Sierra

Institute will design and lead a rural leadership program comprised of a series of workshops and a leadership network to build capacity of communities to pursue future rural development opportunities. Partners will receive assistance in obtaining additional resources through the USDA, the Economic Development Administration, and the Environmental Protection Agency.

This initiative will build upon previous federal and state investments seeking to support the wood-products manufacturing industry in rural communities. These investments include efforts by the state's USDA Rural Development office, the USFS/UC Berkeley Wood Utilization Group, and the State Wood Energy Team program funded by the USFS and implemented by the Watershed Research and Training Center. The SNC has invested resources and staff time in these efforts, including grant writing assistance and program implementation support for the USDA Rural Community Development Initiative (implemented by the Sierra Institute), the USFS Biomass Business Financing Initiative (implemented by the Northern California Community Loan Fund) and numerous biomass business feasibility study grants for individual communities. Through this program, the Sierra Institute will help Regional communities take the next steps towards mill site reuse and biomass business development.

The mission of the Sierra Institute is to promote healthy and sustainable forests and watersheds by investing in the well-being of rural communities and strengthening their participation in natural resource decision-making and programs. The Institute has worked extensively with communities throughout the Sierra Nevada Region providing leadership in wood-based business and forest bioenergy development through the USDA Rural Community Development Initiative. It has also implemented its own local wood utilization projects, including the engineering and construction of a small-scale biomass heat and power facility in Quincy which is housed in a cross-laminated timber building, the first such construction in California. The Sierra Institute also facilitates the Sierra to California All Lands Enhancement (SCALE) project which promotes collaboration and peer-learning among forest collaboratives.

Public agencies have existing programs and grants which support mill site redevelopment and biomass businesses in the state's rural areas, including the EPA Region IX Brownfields program, the Economic Development Administration's Rural Development program, the USDA State Rural Development office, the Governor's Office of Planning and Research, the California Energy Commission, the Center for Creative Land Recycling, the USFS Wood Utilization Team, and the state's Forest Management Task Force. By engaging these entities in a coordinated effort, the Sierra Institute will be able to leverage programs, identify and overcome obstacles, and maximize resources for Sierra Nevada communities.

The proposed project supports the purpose of the TRFRF fund allocation: to improve the health of California's forests and strengthen their resiliency to tree mortality and wildfire by supporting the innovation of wood product manufacturing and increasing rural economic development around wood product manufacturing. It fits the specific direction to "use the funding to provide grants to serve as seed funding for activities such as mill site redevelopment, mass timber manufacturing, workforce development, and other

wood product-related businesses within the Sierra Nevada region.” In addition, the project will support the Action Plan in the category of Resilient Communities Strategy 3: Develop and implement collaborative approaches that enhance community resiliency and bring entities together to solve problems and overcome obstacles. Action 1: Support and participate in efforts to establish new workforce internships or service programs focused on planning and implementing forest health projects and wood products/biomass utilization.

PROJECT SCHEDULE

PROJECT TASKS / DELIVERABLES	TIMELINE
Progress Reports	Every 6 months until project completion
Project kick-off meeting	July 2019
Develop framework for outreach/identifying communities	August 2019
Community Capacity and Opportunity Assessment Including: Community Workshops, Site visits, Summary template with results/next steps	August 2019 – June 2020
Rural Community Leadership Program	August 2019 – June 2021
Wood-based Development Technical Assistance	August 2019 – June 2022
Final report to SNC	June 2022
Estimated Project Completion Date	June 2022

PROJECT COSTS

BUDGET CATEGORIES	SNC FUNDING
Project Costs:	
Project Management	\$199,000
Travel and Workshop Expenses	\$14,000
Contract services	\$120,000
Reporting and Performance Measures	\$15,000
Indirect at 14.9%	\$52,000
TOTAL:	\$400,000

PROJECT PERFORMANCE MEASURES

- Number and Type of Jobs Created
- Number and Value of New, Improved, or Preserved Economic Activities
- Number of People Reached
- Resources Leveraged for the Sierra Nevada
- Number of Collaboratively Developed Plans and Assessments

CEQA Documentation

SNC #: TRFRF002

Project Title: Building Capacity for Rural Development Across Sierra Communities

Applicant: Sierra Institute for Community and Environment

CEQA:

The project is Statutorily Exempt under Section 15262. Feasibility and Planning Studies and Categorically Exempt under Class 6 Section 15306. Information Collection.

- **Notice of Exemption:** See Below

Notice of Exemption

Form D

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

County Clerk
County of _____

(Address)

Project Title: Building Capacity for Rural Development Across Sierra Communities (SNC #TRFRF002)

Project Location - Specific:

The Sierra Institute will work throughout the Sierra Nevada Region - potentially including communities in Modoc, Lassen, Shasta, Tehama, Butte, Plumas, Sierra, Yuba, Nevada, Placer El Dorado, Amador, Calaveras, Tholumne, Mariposa, Madera, Fresno, Tulare, Kern, Alpine, Mono, and Inyo counties.

Project Location – City: NA Project Location – County: See description above

Description of Nature, Purpose and Beneficiaries of Project:

The Sierra Nevada Conservancy would provide funding in the amount of \$400,000 to the Sierra Institute for Community and Environment to build capacity and provide direct technical assistance to rural forested communities working to promote wood-based economic development. The Sierra Institute will engage interested communities throughout the Region in a capacity and opportunity assessment, identifying opportunities for industrial land redevelopment and assessing local capacity needs and assets. Interested communities will then be offered leadership development and other programs to build the local capacity to engage in economic development and redevelopment efforts.

Name of Public Agency Approving Project: Sierra Nevada Conservancy

Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project: Sierra Institute for Community and Environment

Exempt Status: (check one)

- Ministerial (Sec. 21080(b)(1); 15268);
- Declared Emergency (Sec. 21080(b)(3); 15269(a));
- Emergency Project (Sec. 21080(b)(4); 15269(b)(c));
- Categorical Exemption. State type and section number: Section 15306, "Information Collection"
- Statutory Exemptions. State code number: Section 15262, "Feasibility and Planning Studies"

Reasons why project is exempt:

This is a planning, assessment, and technical assistance project to identify and plan potential future projects. It does not involve physical alterations to the environment. The completion of these plans will not have a legally binding effect on future activities.

Lead Agency
Contact Person: Shannon Ciotti Area Code/Telephone/Extension: (530) 823-4689

If filed by applicant:

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: _____ Date: _____ Title: _____

- Signed by Lead Agency Date received for filing at OPR: _____
- Signed by Applicant

Revised 2005