



# INVESTING IN CALIFORNIA'S WATERSHED

Sierra Nevada Conservancy's Proposition 84 Grant Program







State of California

Natural Resources Agency

Sierra Nevada Conservancy

Edmund G. Brown Jr., Governor

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The Sierra Nevada Conservancy initiates, encourages, and supports efforts that improve the environmental, economic and social well-being of the Sierra Nevada Region, its communities and the citizens of California. The Sierra Nevada Conservancy Region includes more than 25 million acres in all or part of 22 counties and is organized into six Subregions:

**North Sierra:** Modoc, Shasta, Lassen Counties

**North Central Sierra:** Tehama, Butte, Plumas, Sierra Counties

**Central Sierra:** Yuba, Nevada, Placer, El Dorado Counties

**South Central Sierra:** Amador, Calaveras, Tuolumne, Mariposa Counties

**South Sierra:** Madera, Fresno, Tulare, Kern Counties

**East Sierra:** Alpine, Mono, Inyo Counties

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# A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR OF THE BOARD

On behalf of the Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) Governing Board and staff, we are pleased to present this report on the public's investment in California's primary watershed -- the streams, lakes, forests, and communities of the Sierra Nevada Region. Thanks to the generosity of the people of California, as well as the support of the state's policymakers, we have awarded over \$50 million to important projects throughout the Sierra Nevada Region under our Proposition 84 grant program.

Whether you are  
an urban water user,  
a farmer or a fish  
in the Delta,  
you are affected  
by the activities  
that occur in the  
Sierra Nevada.

Investing to improve the health of Sierra watersheds and communities does more than benefit our own Region. As the place where more than 60% of the state's developed water supply originates, the work we do to protect our rivers, lakes and forests benefits most of California. Whether you are an urban water user, a farmer or a fish in the Delta, you are affected by the activities that occur in the Sierra Nevada.

Besides supplying an abundance of clean water to millions of Californians, the Sierra provides important wildlife habitat and recreational opportunities and is a valuable source of wood products. Sierra forests also store carbon, making them an important component of the state's efforts to address

a changing climate. Protecting these forests from catastrophic fire and improving their overall health benefits water quality, rural communities, and ultimately, all of us who call California home.

The projects highlighted in this report represent a sampling of the 294 projects awarded by the SNC since 2007. All awarded projects achieve the objectives identified in the statute creating the SNC and Proposition 84.

They also represent the hard work of so many organizations, agencies and partnerships throughout our Region. Their critical efforts have allowed the SNC to achieve our mission and goals. I sincerely appreciate the great work of all of our partners, my fellow board members and our staff in bringing these projects to fruition.

I hope you find this information useful and appreciate the continued and vital need for this type of investment in California's watershed. While the SNC has accomplished a great deal in the past few years, much more needs to be done. We look forward to continuing to do our part in taking care of this incredible landscape known as the Sierra Nevada for generations to come.

**BJ Kirwan**  
Board, Chair

Besides supplying an abundance of clean water to millions of Californians, the Sierra provides important wildlife habitat and recreational opportunities and is a valuable source of wood products.





## An Investment in the State's Primary Watershed

SNC's Proposition 84 funding is being used for "the protection and restoration of rivers, lakes and streams, their watersheds, and associated land, water, and other natural resources."

More than 60% of the state's developed water supply originates in the Sierra Nevada Region, and up to half of the water flowing into the Delta starts its journey in the Sierra's forested watersheds.

## THE SIERRA NEVADA CONSERVANCY'S PROPOSITION 84 PROGRAM

This report is being provided to inform policy makers and the public about the investment that has occurred through the Sierra Nevada Conservancy's (SNC) Proposition 84 grant program.

The SNC was allocated \$54 million in the measure passed by voters in November 2006. Approximately \$50 million was available for grants to eligible entities to conduct activities consistent with the Proposition's requirements and SNC's enabling legislation. The vast majority of that funding has now been awarded.

The first grant round was launched by the SNC in 2007, following appropriation of \$17 million in the 2007-08 state budget. Since that time, the SNC has awarded grants in five rounds, funding 294 projects across all 22 counties in the SNC jurisdiction. The examples highlighted in this report reflect the primary types of projects and outcomes that have resulted from the grant program.

The SNC grant program has provided much-needed resources to our many capable partners who are doing work in the Region consistent with the SNC mission. In many instances the SNC funding served to leverage funding from other sources, allowing for increased effectiveness and project successes.



In addition, SNC staff often provided direct support and technical assistance to our grantees, which has further assisted communities and organizations in achieving their desired project outcomes.

Protecting iconic landscapes, reducing the risk of catastrophic fire, improving water quality, preserving working ranches and farms, and restoring watershed and forest health provide benefits well beyond the boundaries of the Sierra Nevada. These efforts not only contribute to the state's water reliability, they improve and protect habitat and enhance recreational opportunities. They also assist in keeping carbon stored in our forests, rather than being released into the air through catastrophic fire. And importantly, they create jobs that improve the economic and social well-being of our rural communities.



## Project Examples

The SNC awarded grants in the following major categories: Working Landscape Preservation, Forest Health and Fire Prevention, Water Quality, Watershed Health and Iconic Landscape Protection. This report highlights the following as samples of projects funded within each category:

- Campstool Ranch Conservation Easement
- Hulsman Ranch Conservation Easement
- American River Canyon Shaded Fuelbreak
- Calaveras Healthy Impact Product Solutions (CHIPS)
- Fish Friendly Farming
- Combie Reservoir Mercury Removal
- Ash Creek Wildlife Project
- Lower Owens River Project Recreation Use Plan
- Cold Stream Creek Property Acquisition
- Independence Lake



Videos of each of these projects are available online: look for this icon.



*The Sierra Nevada Conservancy greatly appreciates the work of our independent evaluators in the grant process. These experts in a variety of fields help us ensure that the highest quality projects were funded. The SNC also recognizes our staff for all the hard work they have done to implement our grants program.*







# WORKING LANDSCAPES

## CAMPSTOOL RANCH CONSERVATION EASEMENT

### Protecting a Working Forest, Range, and Watershed

In 1919, the Lane family homesteaded Campstool Ranch and gradually increased its size over time, carefully managing it for cattle and timber production. Today at 2,170-acres, the historic Campstool Ranch is one of the largest remaining private properties in Calaveras County. Situated along three miles of the North Fork of the Calaveras River—an important source of water for irrigation and drinking—the property's abundant water and diverse habitats support a wide range of species.

### Challenge

Over the last 20 years, California and Calaveras County have experienced accelerating fragmentation and loss of ranch and forestlands. According to research by the USDA Forest Service, the loss of family-owned forestlands such as Campstool Ranch is a major threat to California's forests, rivers, and ranching heritage. With a subdivision of 25-acre ranchettes bordering Campstool to the south, the landowner was concerned about the pressure to split up this property for development, compromising its abundant natural values.



### Action

In 2012, the Sierra Nevada Conservancy awarded a grant to Pacific Forest Trust to secure a conservation easement on the ranch. The terms of the easement guarantee protection of the 8 springs and 5.8 miles of streams on the property, which in turn ensures a reliable, high quality water supply for downstream users. The easement improves the quality of the land along the ranch's rivers and creeks and guides management to protect and enhance a rich array of habitat types—including meadows, oak stands, chaparral, mixed hardwood-conifer riparian forests, and conifer forests. In particular, this project will help protect habitat for certain key species known to use the property, including the California Spotted Owl, the Railroad Flat deer herd, as well as Rainbow Trout in the North Fork of the Calaveras River. With 645-acres of Bureau of Land Management (BLM) land adjacent to Campstool Ranch, this project will create a 2,800-acre corridor of protected lands. This easement will continue the Lane family's legacy of careful stewardship and ensure a reliable, high-quality water supply for downstream users in the Bay Delta.



Total Grant Amount:  
\$350,000

*"The ranch is really the last of its kind in this part of the county ... it has value as a working ranch, as productive timberland, and as a water source for the rest of us."*

Connie Best, Co-Founder and Co-CEO, Pacific Forest Trust



# HULSMAN RANCH CONSERVATION EASEMENT

Connecting Habitat with Historic Working Landscapes  
in Lassen County

In the heart of Lassen County lies Hulsman Ranch, an iconic Northern California landscape that has remained nearly unchanged for more than 150 years. Privately owned and operated as a working ranch since the 1850s, the ranch is one of the most diversely managed properties in Northern California. Run by the Hulsman family since 1863, the ranch produces grass-fed beef and lamb, wool, hay, vegetables, dairy cattle, and timber. Lassen Creek runs through the property, and maintaining the health of the ranch's meadows and the creek has been a priority for the family. Through the generations, their stewardship has ensured sustainable agricultural production and contributed to the overall pristine condition of the property and its natural resources. Hulsman Ranch is one of Lassen County's most ecologically varied properties, supporting thriving plant and animal communities. The Ranch is a critical link between the Bass Hill Wildlife Area (California Department of Fish and Wildlife) and the Lassen National Forest, ensuring that hundreds of species of birds and animals can flourish safe from disturbance.

## Challenge

Over the years, proposed developments in the vicinity of the ranch have threatened this important habitat connectivity as well as, Lassen Creek's water quality and wildlife habitat. Housing developments have been built up to one side of the ranch, and the land owner was concerned about the influence of further development on wildlife corridors and the ranch's natural values.

## Action

The Sierra Nevada Conservancy provided a grant to the Lassen Land and Trails Trust for an appraisal of the property, which led to the purchase of a more than 500-acre Conservation Easement on the Ranch. This easement, secured with funds from the Wildlife Conservation Board, ensures the long-term protection of vital habitat and maintains the agricultural benefits of an historic Sierra working ranch for generations to come.

## Working Landscapes

The ranching and agricultural lands of the Sierra are an integral part of the landscapes and waterways of the Region protecting its economy, cultural heritage, habitat diversity and scenic beauty. The Sierra Nevada Conservancy is committed to maintaining the viability of the Sierra's productive farms and ranches and enhancing their environmental, economic, and social benefits.



Total Grant Amount:  
\$35,000

*"The Hulsman Ranch epitomizes the three W's ... Watershed, Wildlife  
and Working Landscapes."*

Louise Jensen, Lassen Land and Trails Trust





# FOREST HEALTH & FIRE PREVENTION

## AMERICAN RIVER CANYON SHADED FUELBREAK

### Protecting a Community and the State's Water Supply

The City of Auburn is nestled in the western foothills of the Sierra Nevada overlooking the American River Canyon and the Auburn State Recreation Area (ASRA). Twenty-five miles downstream from Auburn, the American River flows into Folsom Lake and then on to the Federal Central Valley Project, providing water to nearly 2 million Californians. The American River near Auburn includes accessible deep scenic canyons with a mosaic of diverse, unique plant and wildlife communities. In addition to its location within one of the pivotal watersheds of the state, this landscape plays a vital role in Auburn's recreational economy, with hundreds of thousands of people visiting the river every year to fish, hike, bike, to ride OHVs, swim, boat and gold pan.



Total Grant Amount:  
\$146,690

*"This shaded  
fuel break  
is good for  
firefighters  
making a stand  
... AND it's good  
for the river."*

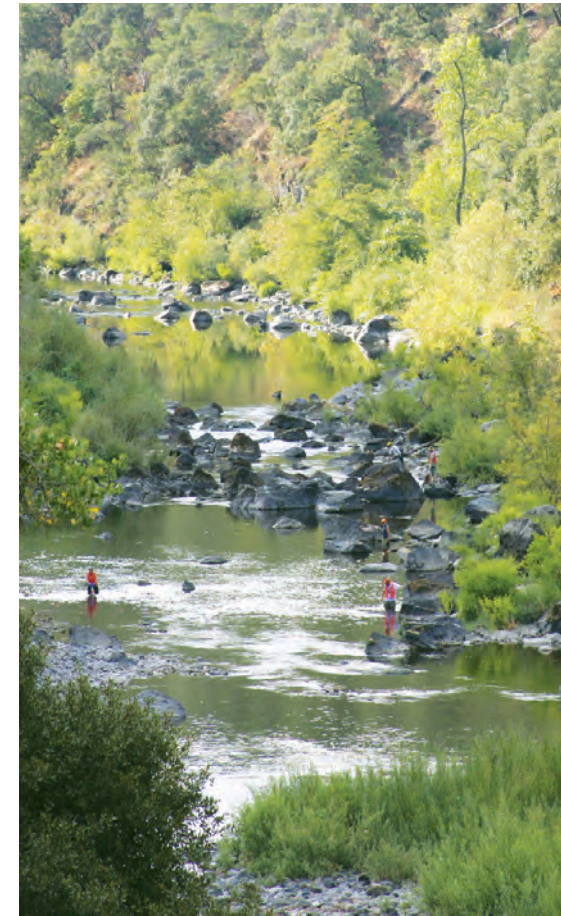
Mark D'Ambrogio,  
Auburn City Fire Chief

### Challenge

Decades of fire suppression and conflicts over forest management have resulted in dense and unhealthy forested slopes in the Canyon and the ASRA. This has led to increased risk of large damaging wildfires, which threaten human lives, property, wildlife habitat, water and air quality, and tourism. Nearby development creates a situation where both the community and the natural landscape of the watershed are at risk.

### Action

In 2012, the Sierra Nevada Conservancy granted funding to the City of Auburn Fire Department to help create part of an 11 mile-long shaded fuelbreak, complementing and leveraging work done by other agencies and hundreds of community volunteers. The fuelbreak will act as a buffer between the City and the heavily wooded American River Canyon and will protect water quality, keep the community safe, improve forest health and sustain the local recreation economy and extraordinary landscape.







# CALAVERAS HEALTHY IMPACT PRODUCT SOLUTIONS (CHIPS)

## Doing Good with Wood

Calaveras County is located in the heart of Sierra Nevada Gold Country. Its forests have been a mainstay of the California timber industry, and its watersheds provide over 90% of the water for 1.3 million people downstream in the East Bay Municipal Utilities District.

## Challenge

The legacy of economic and environmental decisions made during the past 150 years has weakened the health and resilience of the County's forests and communities. The overgrown forests on much of the public land in the area have increased the risk of high-severity, uncharacteristic fires. These conditions threaten human lives and property, degrade air and water quality and jeopardize native plants and wildlife. At the same time, with the decline of the timber industry as a major economic driver, Calaveras County now has some of the highest unemployment rates in the state, remaining consistently above national and state averages.

## Action

The SNC approved two grants to the Calaveras Healthy Impact Product Solutions (CHIPS) organization to improve the health of the County's forests and create new forestry jobs. The first grant funded a highly successful training program for fuels management crews. This program trained local residents to restore the forest to a healthy fire-resilient condition, while preserving native plants and wildlife, combating invasive species, and reducing the risk of property loss and watershed damage associated with unnaturally large, damaging fires. Since the training, CHIPS has placed dozens of trainees in full-time jobs. A second grant provided funding for the engineering and design of the CHIPS Wilseyville Woody Biomass Utilization Product Yard. This facility will produce clean, renewable energy for the communities of Northern Calaveras County and includes a small sawmill and drying kiln, firewood processing equipment, and a native plant garden. The Wilseyville Yard will make fuels treatment and forest restoration an economically viable undertaking in Calaveras County, provide new green jobs for the Region, and additional clean energy for California. The SNC's grants served as matching funds and leveraged significant contributions from the USDA Rural Business Enterprise Grant program, the National Forest Foundation and others.



## Forest Health & Fire Prevention

Sierra Nevada forests are the source of most of California's water. They are also a primary foundation for California's local rural economy and are rich in fish and wildlife. The Sierra Nevada Conservancy is committed to preserving healthy forests, watersheds and communities, thereby protecting our state's water supply, wildlife habitat and supporting local jobs.

Total Grant Amounts:  
\$50,000 &  
\$75,000

*"With the support of the SNC we've benefited our forests and rivers while putting a lot of people back to work."*

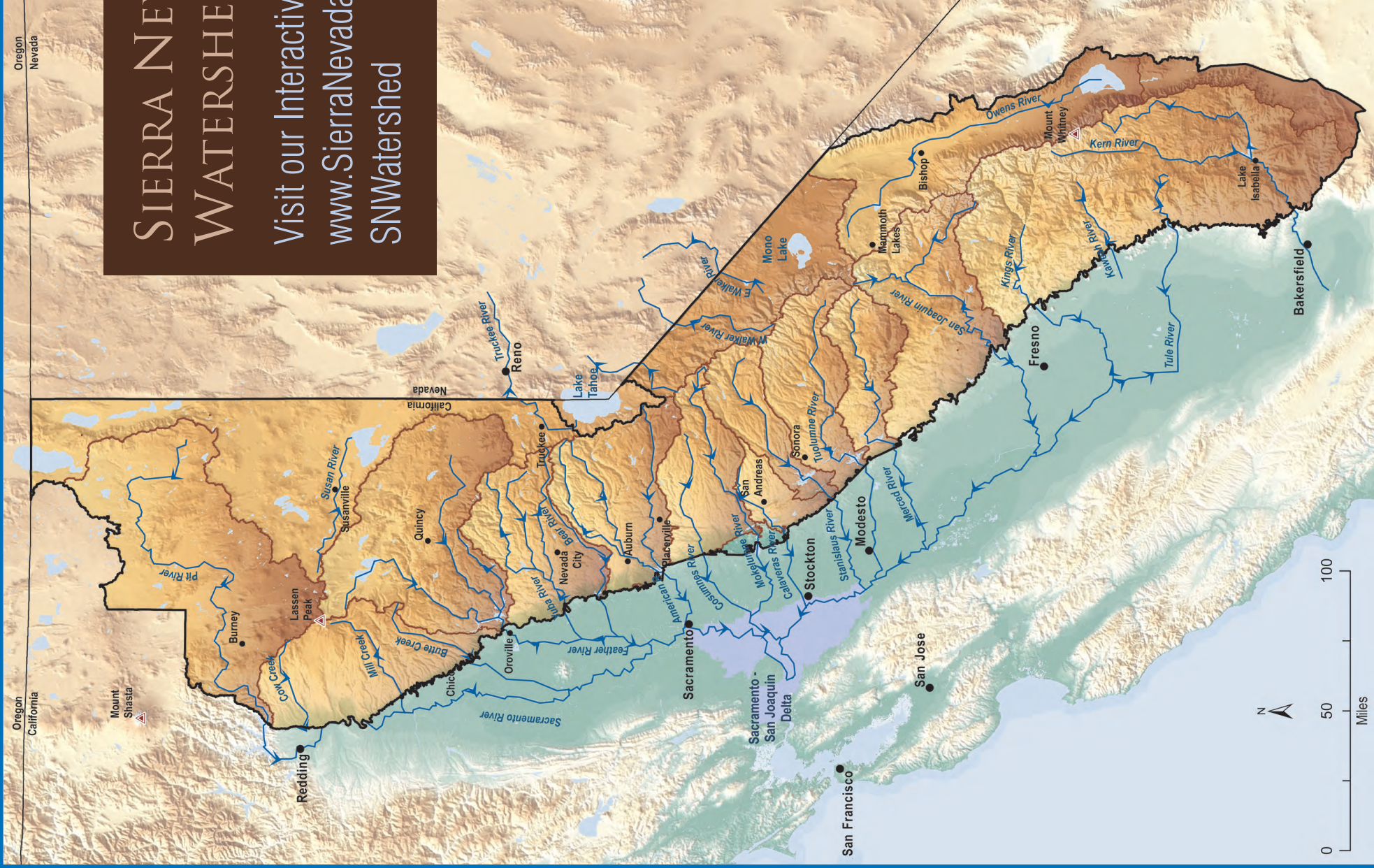
Steve Wilensky, former Calaveras County Supervisor





# SIERRA NEVADA WATERSHEDS

Visit our Interactive Map at  
[www.SierraNevada.ca.gov/  
SNWatershed](http://www.SierraNevada.ca.gov/SNWatershed)





The Sierra Nevada is California's primary watershed. More than 60 percent of the state's developed water supply originates in the mountains of the Sierra Nevada Region. Sierra snowpack provides natural infrastructure that augments the capacity of built facilities and supplies water to the Federal Central Valley Project, the California State Water Project, and numerous other water purveyors. Sierra water is distributed to homes, businesses, and farms throughout California. To explore the relationship between Sierra Nevada watersheds, use of the water, and the investments made by the Sierra Nevada Conservancy to protect and improve the Region, please visit: **[www.SierraNevada.ca.gov/SNWatershed](http://www.SierraNevada.ca.gov/SNWatershed)**







# WATER QUALITY

## FISH FRIENDLY FARMING

### Improving Water Quality One Farm at a Time

El Dorado County has a long tradition of agriculture dating to the Gold Rush of the 1800s. The County's farmers grow a variety of products including wine grapes, pears, plums, peaches, walnuts, and cherries on 237,000-acres of agricultural land. An active agri-tourism association boosts the local economy by bringing many thousands of visitors to the area every year.



### Challenge

Many of the area's streams have been identified by the State of California's Irrigated Lands Program as having impaired water quality, but it is sometimes difficult to identify exactly where pollution is originating. While there is likely a combination of factors affecting water quality and area farmers take many actions to protect water quality, agricultural runoff is often considered one of the sources.

### Action

In 2008, the Sierra Nevada Conservancy awarded a grant to the Georgetown Divide Resource Conservation District to bring the Fish Friendly Farming Environmental Certification Program (FFF) to El Dorado County. The FFF program offers farmers access to expert advice about erosion and soil loss, stream bank failure and water quality degradation. By giving farmers additional tools to address water quality on a property-by-property basis, the FFF program is a cost-effective and efficient watershed-scale management strategy. The program benefits local streams and rivers and downstream water users by helping farmers implement best management practices. As of early 2013, 52 farms and close to 4,000-acres have been certified "Fish Friendly," and the program continues to grow.



Total Grant Amount:  
\$283,480

*"This program helps family farmers produce high quality food, while protecting the quality and reliability of the streams and rivers that run through their land to the Delta."*

Mark Egbert, District Manager,  
El Dorado County &  
Georgetown Divide RCDs





# COMBIE RESERVOIR MERCURY REMOVAL

## Cleaning up Gold Mining's Legacy

Situated on the Bear River, along the Placer and Nevada County lines, is Combie Reservoir. The Nevada Irrigation District (NID) owns and operates the reservoir, which stores winter precipitation and Sierra snowmelt for water treatment plants in the nearby communities of Lake of the Pines and Auburn.

## Challenge

Since its construction more than 80 years ago, Combie Reservoir has impounded thousands of tons of mercury-laden sediment that has washed down the Bear River – a legacy of the area's gold mining history. For many years, NID contracted with private aggregate mining companies to remove these sediments in order to maintain the reservoir's storage capacity, but in 2003, the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board halted the dredging operations as a result of high mercury levels found in excavated sediment. NID was faced with the challenge of how to excavate sediment while managing disturbed mercury.

## Action

NID plans to use an innovative approach to remove mercury at Combie Reservoir, using a centrifuge to 'spin out' the mercury from dredged sediment. Using this new technique, NID expects to remove 200 pounds of mercury and 200,000 tons of sediment over a five-year period.

This will restore a public drinking water supply and demonstrate new practices that can be used by other water districts with similar problems throughout the Sierra. In 2008 the Sierra Nevada Conservancy provided a grant to NID to assess potential environmental impacts associated with the new technique and test experimental equipment to remove mercury-laden sediment from Combie Reservoir. The completion of required California Environmental Quality Act and permit documents has enabled NID to seek funding for further implementation.

## Water Quality

The Sierra Nevada is the source of more than 60% of California's developed water providing habitat for fish and wildlife, and serving cities, farms and industries throughout the state. The Sierra Nevada Conservancy is committed to caring for the Sierra's rivers and streams and protecting and improving water quality and reliability for all Californians.



Total Grant Amount:  
\$100,000

*The SNC grant helped NID permit this innovative project, which will lay the groundwork for us to establish Best Management Practices for removing contaminated sediments from Sierra reservoirs.*

Tim Crough Assistant, General Manager, NID





# WATERSHED HEALTH

## ASH CREEK WILDLIFE PROJECT

### Restoring Water Quality and Quantity in Ash Creek Wildlife Area

The Ash Creek Wildlife Area is located in rural Modoc and Lassen Counties and is one of the finest examples of meadow habitat in the Sierra Nevada. Ash Creek and its wetlands and floodplain feed the Pit River, a major water contributor to Shasta Lake and an integral part of the federal Central Valley Project, providing water to much of California.

Ash Creek also provides critical wildlife habitat, which in turn contributes to the local recreation economy, drawing hunters and anglers from around the state. The Wildlife Area also hosts the largest acreage of vernal pools in the area, providing habitat to a unique assemblage of plant and invertebrate species, thousands of migratory and resident waterfowl, and sensitive species like greater Sandhill Crane and Swainson's Hawk.



Total Grant Amount:  
\$1,000,000

*"The water flows  
from Ash Creek,  
then to the Pit,  
Shasta Lake,  
Sacramento River  
and all the way  
to the Delta."*

Rick Poore, Steam Wise

### Challenge

Over the years, stream channels throughout the area were modified to adapt the land for agriculture. These modified streams eroded into deep channels carrying sediment into the Pit River, affecting water quality and significantly lowering the natural water table and the quantity of water in the areas' rivers and creeks.

### Action

The Sierra Nevada Conservancy awarded a grant to the Pit Resource Conservation District, which leveraged over \$3.5 million in additional funds from a variety of sources to complete the project. This collaborative effort included re-contouring eroded stream channels and elevating the water table to historic levels. This work led to a critical improvement in water quality and wildlife habitat, as well as increased water quantity to the Pit River system. In total, the project restored 3.5 miles of Ash Creek and 2,400-acres of associated wetlands and floodplain, while maintaining historic agricultural uses in the area.





# LOWER OWENS RIVER PROJECT RECREATION USE PLAN

*A River Runs Through It, Again!*

The Lower Owens River Project (LORP) is one of the largest river restoration projects in the nation, affecting 77,657-acres of high desert land in Inyo County, in the Eastern Sierra of California. The LORP area includes 62 miles of sinuous river, more than 1,500-acres of wetland, numerous lakes and ponds and ecologically sensitive lands and wildlife habitat amidst productive, historic ranchlands.

## Challenge

The Lower Owens River was substantially de-watered in 1913 when the flow was diverted to the Los Angeles Aqueduct to augment Los Angeles' water supply. A long process of multi-party negotiations and litigation resulted in the return of water to the river in 2006 to improve fisheries and the health of the land along the river. The addition of water to the Lower Owens River has recreated habitat for fish, birds and wildlife. The resurgence and recovery of these natural areas has resulted in a rediscovery of the area by anglers, paddle boaters, bird watchers, and other recreationists. However, no long-term recreation vision existed to manage the influx of visitors to ensure that recreational use was consistent with the health and sustainability of the Lower Owens River and the area's working ranches.

## Action

In 2008, the Sierra Nevada Conservancy awarded a grant to the Inyo County Water Department to collaborate with agencies, local residents, businesses, tribes, ranchers, recreationists and conservationists to develop the LORP Recreation Use Plan. The Plan provides a balanced framework for river and habitat restoration, recreation, education, and stewardship of the Lower Owens River while preserving the productivity of the area's ranching lands. Implementation of the plan includes designing trails, river access, picnic areas, and signage to protect water quality and watershed health. This work will begin as soon as environmental reviews are complete.



## Watershed Health

The Sierra Nevada, as an important water source, is dependent on the condition of its watersheds – the forests and meadows that drain into waterways. The health of these watersheds is directly linked to the quality and even the amount of water that flows through the region and downstream. The Sierra Nevada Conservancy is committed to protecting the health of the meadows, forests, creeks and lakes, which are the source of California's water.

**Total Grant Amount:**  
**\$95,350**

*"This plan has become the centerpiece for protecting the river and protecting the water supply for millions of people."*

Larry Freilich, Inyo County Water Department







# ICONIC LANDSCAPES

## COLD STREAM CREEK PROPERTY ACQUISITION

Protecting a Pristine Alpine Water Source,  
Wildlife Habitat, and Public Recreation Area

Cold Stream Creek is a pristine tributary of the Little Truckee River which feeds both the Feather River system—the headwaters of the California State Water Project—and the Truckee River. The meadows and forests surrounding the creek provide habitat for numerous species, including iconic bald eagles, northern goshawk, mountain beaver, and black bear, and are the focus of a regional collaboration to conserve and steward the region's remarkable natural assets. The lands include popular hiking trails, and Cold Stream Creek is considered a “very high” priority for water quality protection and is an ideal location for re-introduction of the threatened Lahontan cutthroat trout.

Total Grant Amount:  
\$1,000,000

*“Development  
of the Cold Stream  
property would  
have destroyed  
sensitive wildlife  
habitat and degraded  
the water quality  
of the  
Little Truckee River  
watershed.”*

Perry Norris,  
Executive Director,  
Truckee Donner Land Trust

### Challenge

The physical integrity of the lands in this region of the Sierra is compromised by a checkerboard pattern of public-private ownership. The checkerboard is a product of historic land grants to the railroads and has resulted in land fragmentation which poses obstacles to good stewardship of both private and public lands. There is a long-term regional effort to protect the lands in this area from potential development and the associated impacts on water and air quality and recreational access.

### Action

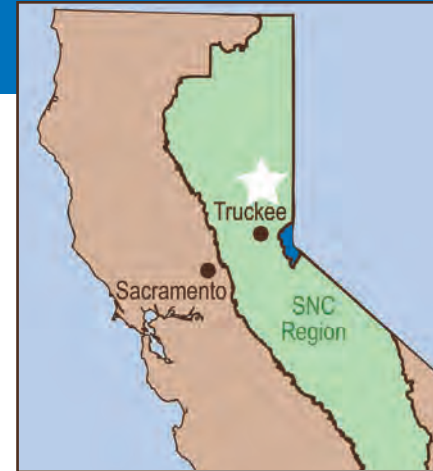
The Sierra Nevada Conservancy awarded a grant to The Trust for Public Land for acquisition of 1,174-acres of alpine meadow and upland forest habitat and two miles of Cold Stream Creek. The grant was matched at a 3:1 ratio by other funders, including the Northern Sierra Partnership, The Trust for Public Land, and Preserving Wild California. The acquisition augments other protected properties around Independence Lake and the Little Truckee River and creates almost 7,000-acres of publicly protected and managed lands in the area. This collaborative project will conserve and restore natural corridors in the region, maintain upstream water quality, improve forest health, increase carbon storage, enhance wildlife movement, and expand recreational enjoyment of this extraordinary landscape.



# INDEPENDENCE LAKE

## Protecting a Jewel of the Sierra

Independence Lake is tucked away among towering peaks in the upper reaches of the Little Truckee River Watershed. Roughly the size and shape of Donner Lake, Independence Lake is a pristine high mountain sanctuary, perfect for hiking or just soaking in the beautiful scenery. While Independence Lake's beauty and rustic nature are astonishing, the biological diversity that it supports is even more amazing. Independence Lake is home to one of two remaining wild, self-sustaining lake populations of the endangered Lahontan cutthroat trout in the world—a fish that currently occupies a small fraction of their historic range. In addition to the Lahontan cutthroat trout, Independence Lake also hosts populations of six other native Lahontan fishes that have lived here since glaciers disappeared some 10,000 years ago.



## Iconic Landscapes

The Sierra Nevada is home to magnificent rivers, snowcapped mountains, sweeping landscapes, unique wildlife habitat and beautiful forests and meadows. The Sierra Nevada Conservancy is committed to protecting the Region's natural areas and resources so that all Californians can enjoy the Sierra's splendors for generations to come.

## Challenge

In past years, developers have considered Independence Lake as a prime location to site a destination resort, potentially limiting public access and introducing invasive species to one of the last unspoiled lakes in the Sierra.

## Action

Permanently protecting Independence Lake was an opportunity to do something very special in protecting the waters of the Sierra while ensuring the public continued access. In 2010, the Sierra Nevada Conservancy joined other agencies and private donors in providing funding to The Nature Conservancy (TNC) for the acquisition of 2,325-acres of privately held land completely surrounding Independence Lake. The property dovetails fully to surrounding National Forest land, which provides a unique opportunity for complete protection of the lake and its entire watershed. Working with partners, TNC will preserve critical habitat for native fish and wildlife, prevent the introduction of aquatic invasive plants and animals, implement forest management strategies to decrease the risk of wildfire, and encourage visitors to enjoy the property and lake in ways that are compatible with the conservation of this precious resource.

Total Grant Amount:  
\$1,000,000



*"This is one of the most spectacular places in the Sierra Nevada. Protecting it for future generations to enjoy is equally spectacular!"*

Chris Fichtel, Project Director,  
The Nature Conservancy



# LOOKING TO THE FUTURE



From pristine alpine lakes to streams running through working family ranches, the Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) is working to protect the waterways of the Sierra Nevada for all Californians. Our careful investment of Proposition 84 funds has made a difference by restoring primary water sources, preserving wildlife habitat, reducing wildfire risk, and helping communities build strong rural economies.

The projects highlighted in this report represent only a small sample of the 294 projects supported by the Sierra Nevada Conservancy with funds from Proposition 84. Working actively with our partners, we have brought many high-value projects to fruition—yet for every one of the projects we funded, there were many worthy projects we could not support due to limited resources.

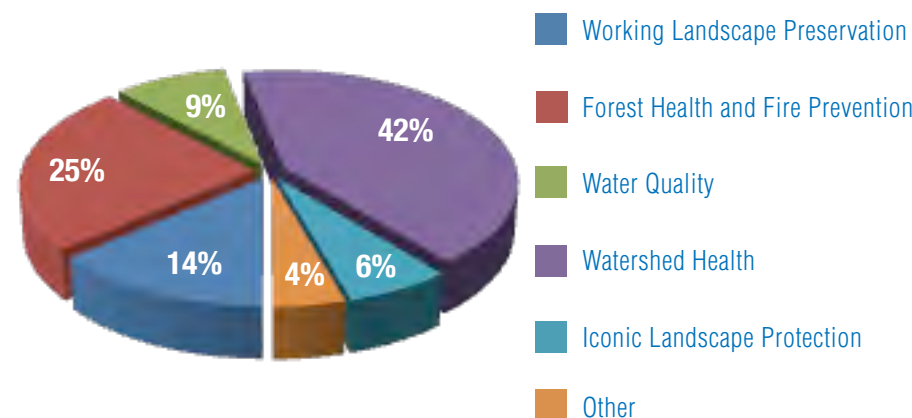


The Sierra Nevada's unique role as the State's primary watershed makes it a critical part of any long-term statewide solution to protect California's water supply. Ongoing investment is imperative to ensure that the SNC can continue the vital work of restoring and preserving the irreplaceable natural resources that a majority of the people, businesses, farms, and ranches in California depend on as a source of a high-quality and reliable water supply.

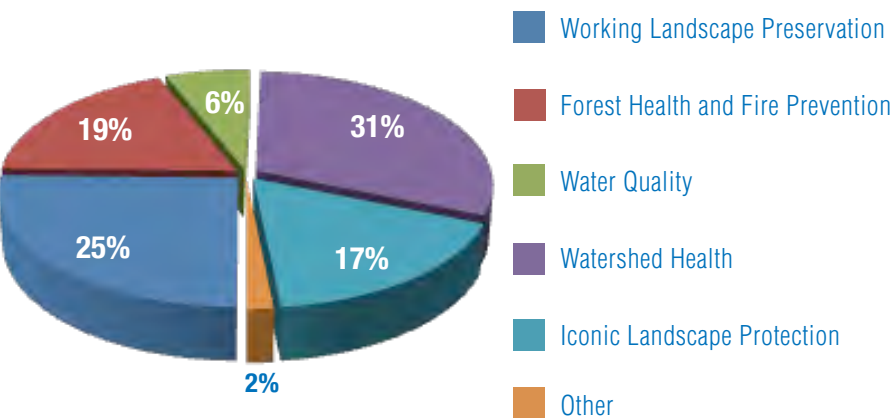
The Sierra Nevada Conservancy is pleased that we can play an important role in this effort, and we look forward to continuing our work to restore and preserve the Sierra's waterways for our health, our environment, our economy, and future generations.

# GRANT PROGRAM PROFILE

Percentage of Grants Awarded by Category



Percentage of Total Dollars Awarded by Category



[View map of awarded projects here.](#)



## Total of Grant Dollars Awarded by Category

Working Landscape Preservation	\$12,929,373.00
Forest Health and Fire Prevention	\$ 9,444,431.90
Water Quality	\$ 3,630,000.00
Watershed Health	\$16,243,904.50
Iconic Landscape Protection	\$ 8,719,739.00
Other	\$ 883,299.00
<b>TOTAL Grant Awards</b>	<b>\$51,850,747.40</b>

[A list of all the projects awarded may be found here.](#)



# SIERRA NEVADA CONSERVANCY BOARDMEMBERS

During the past 8 years, the Governing Board of the SNC has provided policy direction, as well as, being responsible for approving the grants described in this report.

## Governor's Appointees

John Laird	Secretary CA Natural Resources Agency
Todd Ferrara	Designated Representative, Deputy Secretary for External Affairs, CA Natural Resources Agency
*Mike Chrisman	Secretary CA Natural Resources Agency

## Department of Finance

Pedro Reyes	Designated Representative, Chief Deputy Director, Policy
*Karen Finn	Designated Representative, Program Budget Manager, Resources, Environment, Energy and Capital Outlay Unit
*Tom Sheehy	Designated Representative, Chief Deputy Director
*John Lloyd	Designated Representative, Deputy Director

## Public Members, Governor's Appointees

Bob Kirkwood	Public Member
B.J. Kirwan	Public Member
*Carol Whiteside	Public Member

## Legislative Appointees

Bob Johnston	Senate Rules Committee
*Byron Sher	Senate Rules Committee
John Brissenden	Speaker of the Assembly

## Local Government's Appointees

### North Sierra Subregion

Pam Giacomini	Supervisor, Shasta County
*Brian Dahle	Supervisor, Lassen County

### North Central Sierra Subregion

Sherrie Thrall	Supervisor, Plumas County
*Bill Nunes	Supervisor, Sierra County
*Kim Yamaguchi	Supervisor, Butte County
*Rose Comstock	Supervisor, Plumas County

## Central Sierra Subregion

Ron Briggs	Supervisor, El Dorado County
*Ted Owens	Supervisor, Nevada County
*Hal Stocker	Supervisor, Yuba County
*Robert Weygandt	Supervisor, Placer County
*Helen Baumann	Supervisor, El Dorado County

## East Sierra Subregion

Byng Hunt	Supervisor, Mono County
*Linda Arcularius	Supervisor, Inyo County
*Don Jardine	Supervisor, Alpine County

## South Central Sierra Subregion

Lee Stetson	Supervisor, Mariposa County
*Dick Pland	Supervisor, Tuolumne County
*Paolo Maffei	Supervisor, Tuolumne County
*Steve Wilensky	Supervisor, Calaveras County
*Louis Boitano	Supervisor, Amador County

## South Sierra Subregion

Tom Wheeler	Supervisor, Madera County
*Jon McQuiston	Supervisor, Kern County
*Allen Ishida	Supervisor, Tulare County
*Bob Waterson	Supervisor, Fresno County

## Non-Voting Liaison Advisors

U.S. Secretary of the Interior's Appointments:

A. Este Stifel	U. S. Bureau of Land Management
*Kathy Hardy	U. S. Bureau of Land Management
*Bill Haigh	U. S. Bureau of Land Management

Karen Goodrich-Taylor	National Park Service
*David Graber, Ph.D.	National Park Service
*Mike Tollefson	National Park Service

U.S. Secretary of Agriculture's Appointment

Barnie Gyant	U.S. Forest Service
*Daniel Jiron	U.S. Forest Service
*Rob Macwharther	U.S. Forest Service
*Beth Pendleton	U.S. Forest Service

\* represents past seated Boardmembers

