



June 11-12, 2014

Board Meeting

Inter-Mountain Fairgrounds, Ingram Hall
44218 A Street
McArthur, CA 96056

June 11 -12, 2014
Inter-Mountain Fairgrounds, McArthur
Ingram Hall
44218 A Street
McArthur, CA 96056 ([MAP](#))



June 11, 2014

Board Tour

1:30 – 5:00 PM

Members of the Board and staff will participate in a field trip to explore issues and activities relevant to ranching and agricultural lands in the North Subregion. Members of the public are invited to participate in the field tour but are responsible for their own transportation. The tour will begin at the PG&E launch site parking lot on Main Street/River Street, ½ mile south of Hwy 299 in downtown Fall River Mills.

Reception

5:00 – 7:00 PM

Following the Board tour, Boardmembers and staff will attend a reception open to the public. The reception will be held at Hat Creek Hereford Ranch, 41363 Opdyke Lane, Hat Creek, CA. 96040.

June 12, 2014

9:00 – 1:00 PM

Board Meeting

(End time of the meeting is approximate)

- I. **Call to Order**
- II. **Roll Call**
- III. **Approval of March 12, 2014 Joint Board Meeting Minutes (ACTION)**
- IV. **Approval of March 13, 2014 Board Meeting Minutes (ACTION)**
- V. **Public Comments**
Provide an opportunity for the public to comment on non-agenda items.
- VI. **Board Chair's Report**
The Chair of the Board will provide an update on matters of interest to the Governing Board.
- VII. **Executive Officer's Report (INFORMATIONAL)**
 - a. Administrative Update
 - b. Policy and Outreach Update
 - c. Ranching and Agricultural Lands
Guest Speaker: Penny Leff, Agritourism Coordinator, UC ANR Small Farm Program
 - d. Miscellaneous Updates
- VIII. **Deputy Attorney General's Report (INFORMATIONAL)**

March 12, 2014

Joint Meeting of the Sierra Nevada Conservancy
and the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Conservancy
Convention Center, Room 202
1400 J Street
Sacramento, CA 95814



Meeting Purpose/Desired Outcomes: The Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) and the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Conservancy (DC) understand the benefits of working collaboratively to build greater understanding of (1) the interconnections between our two regions and (2) the resulting need for integrated approaches to addressing water and climate issues from the Sierra to the Sea. Our Governing Boards have come together today to build understanding regarding the issues facing our two regions and their linkages, to increase awareness of the need to invest in integrated approaches that account for the inter-connections from the Sierra to the Sea, and to increase awareness of the role our Conservancies play in achieving conservation outcomes across our linked ecosystems.

The Governing Boards of the Sierra Nevada and Delta Conservancies received presentations relating to key issues that affect both regions represented by the Conservancies and adopted a Joint Resolution regarding the working relationship between the two organizations.

Convene Joint Meeting

Board Chair BJ Kirwan (SNC) called the meeting to order at 1:15 and welcomed everyone to the joint meeting between the Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) and the Sacramento - San Joaquin Delta Conservancy (DC).

Board Chair Kirwan welcomed Boardmember Allen Ishida back to the SNC Board.

Roll Call

Sierra Nevada Conservancy

Present: BJ Kirwan, Todd Ferrara, Bob Kirkwood, Eraina Ortega, Bob Johnston, John Brissenden, Pam Giacomini, Sherrie Thrall, Ron Briggs, Byng Hunt, Allen Ishida, Jerry Bird (alternate for Bernie Gyant, U.S. Forest Service), and Reuben Leal (alternate for Este Stifel, Bureau of Land Management)

Absent: Don Neubacher

Delta Conservancy

Present: Mike Eaton, Karen Finn, Todd Ferrara, Darla Guenzler, Mike Hoover, Amy Hutzel, Don Nottoli, Mary Piepho, Ken Vogel, Jim Waters, Lois Wolk, Eddie Woodruff, and Marge Colar (for Robin Kulakow, Yolo Basin Foundation)

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Absent: Joe LaClair, David Murillo, Jim Provenza, Maria Rea, Dan Taylor, Stu Townsley, Michael Villines, and Mark Wilson

Welcome

Board Chair Kirwan introduced Secretary John Laird of the California Natural Resources Agency. Kirwan thanked Secretary Laird for establishing the Sierra Nevada Conservancy through legislation.

Secretary Laird thanked the two Boards and acknowledged his role in both Conservancies. He said that Conservancies have served a valuable role, and that prior to the establishment of the SNC, decisions for the Sierra were being made without the Sierra having a seat at the table. He recognized that the Delta Conservancy serves the same role and holds the same importance and stated that both organizations provide voices for economic development and environmental sustainability. Secretary Laird acknowledged the importance of reminding policy makers and decision makers of the importance of Conservancies and the importance of local representatives having a seat at the table. He also encouraged the Conservancies to continually communicate the important role that they play in ensuring that funding is delivered to the appropriate projects in their representative areas.

Laird noted that eight years have passed since last resources bond was approved that supports the Conservancies' missions. Laird said that in this year's proposed budget, for the first time, Cap and Trade money has been proposed that can be used for fire prevention, forest work, and habitat and wetland restoration. Laird said that Conservancies are well positioned and hold a unique capacity to successfully apply and use these funds well. Laird noted that water used throughout the state, originating in the Sierra and flowing through the Delta, highlights the importance of bonds and Conservancies.

Laird noted that the two Conservancies have common missions and share a bond, and he encouraged both Boards to recognize that bond. He praised the two Boards for meeting and wished the Boards success moving forward.

Sierra to the Sea Overview

Jim Branham, Executive Officer for the Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC), opened by discussing the various relationships between the two Conservancies and regions. He noted that water is one of the key relationships, starting in the Sierra Nevada and making its way to the Delta.

Branham provide an overview of the SNC mission and role in the Region, including the Proposition 84 Grant Program.

He further discussed the important role the Region plays in meeting California's water needs and the variety of challenges faced in the upper watersheds. Branham also

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discussed climate change implications as they relate to the Sierra Nevada, fire, snowpack and water supply.

Branham concluded that the SNC is working to address all of the before mentioned concerns in the Region. He said that SNC is working to restore watershed health, reduce the risk of wildfires, improve water quality, and protect critical landscapes in the Sierra from conversion to other uses.

Campbell Ingram, Executive Officer for the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Conservancy (DC), provided an overview of the DC and the role that the DC plays. He said that ecosystem restoration, protection of agricultural land, and increased opportunities for tourism and recreation within the Delta region are of primary concern. Ingram said that over the years the DC has been working to establish relationships and that a proposed state water bond is of significant importance to offer continued support of DC's mission.

Ingram noted that the Delta is the hub of the California water system and provides flood control. Ingram also said that Delta water supports millions of acres of farmland, water for 25 million people, and critical salmon habitat. He discussed the changes that have occurred in the Delta and the potential impacts of climate change on the system. Boardmember Hutzler (DC), representative of the State Coastal Conservancy, thanked both of the presenters and recognized the importance of the connection between the Sierra and the Sea.

Branham noted that while a meeting of all three Boards would have been ideal, a facility to hold all three Boards (SNC, DC, and the California Coastal Conservancy) would have been challenging. Branham also mentioned that working with the DC to plan this meeting had been wonderful.

Sierra to the Sea in a Statewide Context

Board Chair Vogel (DC) introduced Assembly Member Brian Dahle. Dahle mentioned that both Senator Pavley and Senator Wolk have been great to work with, and that he has enjoyed working with Senator Pavley on bills that are important to him. Dahle said that most people think of dams as the water source, but miss the importance of watersheds above the dam. Dahle also mentioned that severely overgrown forests cause catastrophic fires due to the suppression of historically beneficial small fires and that there is a need to look for ways to put watershed back into good health.

Dahle said that he has worked closely with Senator Pavley on AB 32 implementation. However, he said that AB 32 does not account for forest and carbon management. Dahle encouraged that proposed carbon tax funds should link back to the Sierra. Dahle highlighted four big areas that he felt should be addressed in a water bond:

1. Investment in watersheds
2. Investment in ground water storage

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3. The need for wet water (building more reservoir and storage sites for readily available water)
4. Conservation

Dahle also noted the need to educate legislators about the importance of watersheds. He stated that he is a strong supporter of the Conservancies and will respond to the needs they present.

Chair Vogel introduced Senator Wolk. Wolk said that it has been a pleasure to work with Assembly Member Dahle. Said she is a strong supporter of state Conservancies that focus on conservation investments and yield significant protection to the state's resources. Wolk said that Conservancies uniquely connect to the local community where work needs to be done. She said that both the Sierra Nevada Region and the Delta are ground zero for one of the biggest water problems in the state - a receding snowpack that is the source for Sierra watersheds and the Delta.

Wolk mentioned critical water problems, including species loss, water degradation, and increasing water exports within an inept system. She did not support the water bond of 2009 but did support the formation of the Delta Conservancy. She said that she believed that the current 2014 water bond would not pass and instead decided to write her own water bond (SB 848) that would focus on regional and community projects. Wolk said that the focus of SB 848 is on regional water supply development, addressing critical drinking water needs, community supported ecosystem restoration and enhancement, replenishing dwindling funds for ecosystem projects, and the development of surface and groundwater storage. Wolk said that parts of SB 848 would supply funds to the SNC and the DC and that the current drought has given us an opportunity to focus on water issues.

Board Chair Vogel introduced Senator Fran Pavley. Senator Pavley discussed various tours and experiences that she has had with both the Sierra and the Delta, and applauded the Sierra to the Sea focus of the meeting. Senator Pavley addressed current water bonds in California and noted her concern with some legislators suggesting that allocations to Conservancies in water bonds are "earmarks" and Conservancies don't contribute to water supply and water quality. She encouraged both Conservancies to continue to communicate with decision makers about the importance of Conservancies and how they improve California's water quality and supply. Pavley also reminded the Boards to support parts of the water bond that pertain to Southern California's conservation and regional sustainability so that there is less demand from the Sierra and the Delta. Pavley noted that it is important to address existing reservoir capacity in the areas where removal of sedimentation to increase capacity is feasible.

Senator Pavley also discussed AB 32 Cap and Trade auction revenue projects. She said that those revenues will go towards projects that reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and noted that there is growing interest to incorporate the consideration of forest projects, as well as the water-energy nexus. Twenty percent (20%) of California's

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energy is used for moving, treating and heating water. Pavley noted there are opportunities for those projects, and for Conservancies.

Boardmember Kirkwood (SNC) said that you Branham could point to the SNC as a grantor that has distributed funds that improve both forests and watersheds. He commended Senator Pavley for her comments on sediment in reservoirs and also pointed out SNC's record as a successful grant distributor.

Senator Wolk agreed and said that she would bring this message back to her working groups – the speed and transparency of SNC grant dispersals, in addition to the relationship with local communities, make it an asset.

Boardmember Hunt (SNC) said that we need to educate the constituents on current bond measures and that education should possibly be a role for the Conservancies.

Assembly Member Dahle stated that cost seems to be the driving factor for why the water bond has not moved forward. Dahle noted that drought has risen to the top of the conversation but that it will take time for any changes to take place. Dahle said we need to be wise on how we allocate money so that 10 years from now we can stand on our decisions.

Boardmember Piepho (DC) thanked both Assembly Member Dahle and Senator Wolk for their presentations. She said that labeling Conservancies as an earmark is wrong and encouraged SNC and the California State Coastal Conservancy to band together to address that concern.

Senator Wolk stated that Conservancies are state agencies, and labeling them as an earmark is the same as labeling Department of Water Resources (DWR) as an earmark, which would never be done. She said that we need to put an end to that and she encouraged the Executive Officers to address the issue in a conference call.

Boardmember Woodruff (DC) mentioned that in California we are very good at building things, but not at maintaining them. He said that he found the sedimentation issues in reservoirs very interesting and noted that sedimentation in the Delta is also an issue. He asked if there was a collaborative project that both Conservancies could work on to address this issue and thanked the presenters for bringing up the issue.

Panel Discussion:

Threats and Opportunities—a system-wide view

A. Climate change and its impacts on the Sierra and the Delta.

Dr. Daniel R. Cayan from the Scripps Institution and US Geological Survey provided an overview of the likely implications of changes in the climate as it relates to the Sierra Nevada and the Delta, noting increasing temperatures in the Sierra and rising sea levels affecting the Delta.

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B. A policy perspective on the link between the Sierra and the Delta.

Felicia Marcus from the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) introduced some of the key policy issues that decision makers will have to make over the coming years, and stated that it will be key for agencies like the Conservancies to work together for future changes. Marcus said that California's hydrology is highly variable and presents one of the most difficult issues for the state. She said that every region has a different mix in their sources of water and that every region is affected differently by climate change. She noted that there are also a mix of solutions, and not just one answer to California's water issues.

Marcus discussed the California Water Action Plan (Plan) that was recently released by the Governor's office. She said that the Plan established a list of priorities for California water over the next five (5) years. Marcus listed issues that Conservancies can address including ecosystem improvements ahead of regulatory requirements, stabilizing the Delta, and forest health. Marcus also mentioned a variety of key decisions, drivers and opportunities coming up that the Conservancies can participate in. She said that the SWRCB's job isn't to pick one side or the other; it is to maximize the opportunities for all sides.

C. How ecosystem services tie the Sierra and the Delta regions together.

David Edelson from The Nature Conservancy (TNC) discussed the Sierra Nevada as the primary source of California's water supply, and noted that investing in Sierra watersheds is beneficial to all of California. Edelson said that the Sierra Nevada has been financially short-changed historically as higher emphasis has been placed on the Delta. He mentioned that much of the land in the Sierra Nevada is unprotected or unmanaged and highlighted the impacts of the Rim Fire on San Francisco's water and power supply as an example.

Edelson addressed the unnatural state of many Sierra Nevada forests and the need for ecologically sound thinning. He suggested such actions could increase water yield and improve snowpack.

Edelson said that post-fire erosion causes large sediment events that are very costly. Edelson also stated that forest thinning and management can significantly prevent such events.

Edelson also highlighted the importance of meadows for both wildlife and water reliability. Edelson introduced the Mokelumne Watershed Environmental Benefits Project that TNC has been working on with SNC, the US Forest Service, and others. He said that the study looks at the economic benefit of investing in forest thinning.

Boardmember Briggs (SNC) asked whether the number of trees in forest thinning in the power point was accurate. Edelson responded that the graphics are representative and are a work in progress.

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Boardmember Briggs (SNC) asked that the presentations be available online. He also stated that El Dorado County recognizes a substantial need to thin the forest, both ecologically and socially.

Briggs asked Marcus if a council of governments is what she was suggesting for addressing regional water needs. Marcus stated that the approach should be to respect the regional, on-the-ground knowledge, and to only step in if needed.

Briggs asked Dr. Cayan what he would have the Conservancies do to address the issues that he highlighted in his presentation. Cayan noted that we all share the same atmosphere so we can't solve climate change alone, but that policies can be addressed at the state level. Cayan said that there are ways to make small changes on an individual level, that California should provide a model on how to deal with climate change, and that it takes a variety of efforts based on location to address the issues.

Boardmember Guenzler (DC) thanked the panel and asked Edelson to explain the high and low referred to in the Mokelumne Avoided Cost Analysis. Edelson replied it was a range based on the modeling.

Guenzler asked Marcus what she had in mind when she mentioned the suite of tools Conservancies have to address water problems. Marcus stated that protecting forests and meadows have shown to have direct effect on water quality.

Boardmember Johnston (SNC) thanked Cayan and Edelson for their presentations, and mentioned that we will never solve California's problems by exporting half of the water the way that we have been. He also suggested better market-like pricing on water in the state, and said that more coordinated ground and surface water management are important parts of the water solution.

Boardmember Kirkwood (SNC) noted that forest floors will hold water later in the year just like meadows do, and that a thinned forest supports this timed release on a greater geographic area than meadows.

Joint Resolution

Jim Branham recognized SNC Boardmembers Giacomini and Briggs for their effort in planning the joint Board meeting.

Branham and Ingram talked about the interconnections between the two Conservancies and encouraged the Boards to consider collaborative approaches to solving these issues.

Board Chair Kirwan asked for a motion from the SNC Boardmembers:

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ACTION: Boardmember Kirkwood moved and Boardmember Briggs seconded a motion to approve Joint Resolution No. 03-14-01 "*Sierra to the Sea*". The motion passed unanimously.

Board Chair Vogel asked for a motion from the DC Boardmembers:

ACTION: Boardmember Darla Guenzler moved and it was seconded a motion to approve Joint Resolution No. 03-14-01 "*Sierra to the Sea*". The motion passed unanimously.

The joint resolution was passed unanimously by both Boards.

Public Comment, Meeting Wrap-up and Adjournment

Public Comment:

Lisa Starling with Life Science commented that she has worked mostly in the San Francisco Bay with the Department of Fish and Wildlife, and that she wanted to recommend the support for the creation of endowed trusts to support Conservancy projects. She said that getting long term buy in for maintenance of conserved lands is important.

Wrap-up:

Board Chair Vogel noted a reception will take place at the Leland Stanford Mansion and asked that everyone join them.

Adjournment:

Board Chair Kirwan adjourned the meeting at 4:34 PM.

IX. 2013-14 Healthy Forests/Abandoned Mine Lands Grant Awards (ACTION)

The Board may take action on recommended grants to be awarded under the 2013-14 Grant Program. Staff will present the following projects and their related California environmental Quality Act (CEQA) document to the Board for Action:

- Project #[791](#) – Oro De Amador Removal Action Workplan with Notice of Exemption from CEQA
- Project #[781](#) – Camptonville Forest Biomass Business Center Feasibility Study with Notice of Exemption from CEQA
- Project #[802](#) – Upper Stevens Meadow Project with Notice Exemption from CEQA

X. Review of 2013-14 Action Plan Accomplishments (INFORMATIONAL)

The Board will be provided an overview of the status of activities conducted under the 2013-14 Action Plan.

XI. 2014-15 Proposed Action Plan (ACTION)

The Board may act to approve the Action Plan for the 2014-15 fiscal year.

XII. Mokelumne Watershed Avoided Cost Analysis (INFORMATIONAL)

Staff will present the final report of the Mokelumne Watershed Avoided Cost Analysis and discuss the outreach efforts.

XIII. Boardmembers' Comments

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

XIV. Public Comments

Provide an opportunity for the public to comment on non-agenda items.

XV. Adjournment

Meeting Materials are available on the SNC Web site at www.sierranevada.ca.gov. For additional information or to submit written comment on any agenda item, please contact Ms. Armstrong at (530) 823-4700, toll free at (877) 257-1212; or via email at Tristyn.armstrong@sierranevada.ca.gov, or in person or by mail at: 11521 Blocker Drive, Suite 205, Auburn CA 95603. If you need reasonable accommodations please contact Ms. Armstrong at least five (5) working days in advance, including documents in alternative formats.

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, subdivision (e)(2)(B)(i).

March 12 - 13, 2014
California Department of Food and
Agriculture, Auditorium
1220 N Street
Sacramento, CA 95814



I. Call to Order

Board Chair BJ Kirwan called the meeting to order at 9:05 AM and thanked the Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) Executive Officer and staff for the previous day's informative joint meeting with the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Conservancy (Delta Conservancy).

II. Oath of Office for New Boardmembers

Deputy Attorney General Christine Sproul administered the oath to Amador County Supervisor Luis Boitano and acknowledgement was given that Boardmember Ishida was sworn in on the previous day.

III. Roll Call

Present: BJ Kirwan, Todd Ferrara, Bob Kirkwood, Eraina Ortega, Bob Johnston, John Brissenden, Pam Giacomini, Sherrie Thrall, Byng Hunt, Allen Ishida, Jerry Bird (alternate for Bernie Gyant, U.S. Forest Service), and Reuben Leal (alternate for Este Stifel, Bureau of Land Management)

Absent: Don Neubacher and Ron Briggs

IV. Approval of December 5, 2013 Meeting Minutes (ACTION)

Boardmember Brissenden asked that a revision be made to Agenda Item XI. Allocation of up to \$1 million for Restoration and Rehabilitation Efforts Related to the Rim Fire to read "to fruition" instead of "from fruition."

ACTION: Boardmember Giacomini moved and Boardmember Thrall seconded a motion to approve the December 5, 2013 Meeting Minutes with Boardmember Brissenden's edits incorporated. The motion passed unanimously.

V. Public Comments

There were no comments from the public.

Boardmember Brissenden acknowledged Ron Hames, Supervisor and SNC Liaison from Alpine County, who was in attendance.

VI. Board Chair's Report

Board Chair Kirwan asked if any Boardmembers had comments related to the previous day's joint Board meeting with the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Conservancy.

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Boardmembers Kirkwood, Brissenden and Kirwan commented on the positive nature of the joint meeting with the hope that the SNC will continue to build on the relationship with the Delta Conservancy, and perhaps reach out to the Coastal Conservancy.

Kirwan also asked Jim Branham, SNC Executive Officer, to address the letter received from Assembly Member Anthony Rendon's Office.

Branham mentioned the different approaches that legislators have been taking to craft a new water bond. In addition, he also discussed the Public Records Act (PRA) Request that SNC received from Assembly Member Anthony Rendon's office. Branham explained that SNC, as well as many other conservancies, received a request from Rendon's office for information regarding a contract with the Planning and Conservation League Foundation, which provides information on legislation and State policy and funding opportunities that are relevant to conservancies. Branham said SNC will be responding to that request by the deadline.

Kirkwood said staff should respond to the request by building a document that demonstrates that SNC's grant program is operated transparently and without earmarks, and that the water and forest-related projects that have been funded have benefit beyond the Sierra.

Boardmember Johnston said that we are the state agency that has the local knowledge to be effective. He said that the SNC is guided by state statute and is an instrument of the legislature. Johnston said that SNC can show that we have done a good job.

Boardmember Giacomini said that she agreed with Kirkwood's comments, as well as Senator Pavley's comments during the previous day's meeting about getting rid of the misconceptions about what conservancies do.

Branham said that once it was clear that Assembly Member Rendon's bill would not include direct allocations to conservancies, staff began focusing on ensuring that funding was provided to the Sierra Nevada Region.

Boardmembers Kirkwood, Johnston, and Kirwan requested that the Executive Officer draft a letter to Assembly Member Rendon's office indicating how effective the SNC is and the tremendous value that it brings to the Region and to the state. All other Boardmembers agreed.

Boardmember Brissenden asked whether Branham had had conversations with other conservancies about how they plan to respond to the PRA. Branham indicated that SNC has been in contact with other conservancies.

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Boardmember Ferrara noted that the California Natural Resources Agency has offered all of the conservancies assistance in responding to the PRA. In response to a question from Brissenden about whether Secretary Laird would engage in the education process about the value of conservancies with legislators, Ferrara responded that the Secretary Laird will continue to be supportive.

VII. Executive Officer's Report (INFORMATIONAL)

a. Administrative Update

Branham introduced Amy Lussier, SNC's Chief of Administrative Services Division. Lussier gave an update on SNC's budget and three new staff members: Belinda Gutierrez, Jennifer Barnes, and Denice Mayberry. These three positions were filled in order to reallocate workload, fill a vacancy, and bring work in-house that had previously been completed externally.

Boardmember Kirkwood thanked Lussier for a brief report.

b. Governor's Budget/Cap and Trade Auction Revenue Update

Branham discussed the new Cap and Trade Auction Revenue funding source that has been created as a result of Assembly Bill 32. Branham said that SNC had submitted a proposal for funding that could be utilized in the Sierra Nevada Region, but SNC has not been identified for funding in the Governor's budget. Branham said SNC has been in discussion with other departments that were identified, specifically CalFire and the Department of Fish and Wildlife, about ways to work collaboratively on projects.

c. Rim Fire Update

Branham gave an update on SNC's activities related to the Rim Fire. Branham said SNC has been involved in discussions with the Yosemite Stanislaus Solutions group and the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) relative to potential projects to be funded with the SNC's funds. SNC has also had discussion with other state departments and non-profits about leveraging those funds. Additional conversations are being held with the USFS to determine if there are projects that could be implemented with SNC funds that may not require a full environmental impact statement (EIS) process. Branham said staff will continue to stay engaged and will bring projects to the Board for funding when they are ready.

Branham said the USFS is in the process of preparing National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) documents to support salvage logging in the burn area. Branham said that SNC Staff helped convene two (2) technical workshops for USFS scientific and line staff and a variety of stakeholders on ecological issues to be addressed in the Salvage Harvest EIS. Branham said input from those workshops has been provided to the Stanislaus National Forest and that there is interest in conducting additional workshops on reforestation and other restoration efforts later in the year.

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Branham also noted that SNC has been incorporating messaging around the Rim Fire in outreach materials.

d. Policy and Outreach Update

Branham said that numerous water bond proposals were introduced prior to the recent bill introduction deadline. He said that creation of new storage capacity is a major topic discussed in these bills, and that a number of the bills do not incorporate funding for the upper watershed.

Boardmember Ishida mentioned that the San Joaquin Valley counties supervisors and the Delta counties supervisors are developing their position on the water bond proposals that would include funding for the SNC and the Delta Conservancy. Ishida said the supervisors are looking for support for the effort, and that it is important to the counties that they have input in the water bond process. Branham said that he would appreciate any additional information that Ishida could share about their efforts.

Angela Avery, Regional Policy and Programs Manager, said the California Water Action Plan was finalized and that SNC Staff were very pleased to see that it included Sierra Nevada-specific language and mention of the importance of source watershed health, an inclusion advocated by the SNC and its partners.

Avery provided an overview of other legislative issues including legislation that would establish a Natural Resources Climate Improvement Program and a bill proposing a park bond. Avery said that SNC is called out specifically for funding under the forest and working lands chapter in the Park Bond.

Avery updated the Board on a number of other activities in which the Regional Policy and Programs team has been involved, including tours for legislators and their staff in the Sierra in coordination with Assemblyman Dahle. Avery also said that staff are tracking and participating in Cap and Trade, Abandoned Mine Lands, and water policy hearings as appropriate. In addition, Avery said that the Sierra Business Council (SBC) is actively working to build a Sierra coalition focused on elevating the importance of the Region and that SNC Staff are supporting that effort.

Avery also provided an update on various outreach efforts including Web page updates and increased use of social media.

Avery mentioned that planning for the 2014 Great Sierra River Cleanup has begun and that this year the event will be held on Saturday, September 20th.

Boardmember Ferrara said that every Monday the California Natural Resources Agency puts out a two-page fact sheet on real-time drought information and suggested that SNC Staff share with the Board if Boardmembers are interested.

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Board Chair Kirwan asked whether Yosemite is open for public access, or whether it remains closed due to the fire. Branham said that the park is generally open, but that there may be some areas that remain closed.

Boardmember Johnston asked whether the interactive maps would be linked to The Nature Conservancy's (TNC) "*Where Does Your Water Come From?*" online map. Avery said that SNC's current map has been developed internally but that the intent is to still work with TNC in the future.

Boardmember Brissenden asked if the map focus moved from the tap to the Sierra. Avery said yes, and that the focus of the maps would be to link decision makers in urban areas to the source of water for their district.

Johnston suggested that the maps include information on the cost comparison in a particular watershed between dam construction, and meadow restoration or forest restoration.

e. SNFCI Update

Branham said that at the regional level, the SNFCI Coordinating Council has focused on developing a set of issues that the group believes are significant issues for the USFS to address in order to increase the pace and scale of forest treatments. Branham said that staff met with Randy Moore and Bernie Gyant, both of USFS, recently on this topic and that we are in the process of agreeing on a course of action. Branham said that there will be a meeting at the end of next month to continue this discussion.

Branham said that Mandy Vance, SNC Mt. Whitney Area Representative, has been working with the USFS to develop a conservation plan for the Pacific fisher in the Southern Sierra. He noted that SNC has entered in to an agreement with the Pacific Southwest Research Station to address issues and research needed around illegal marijuana grows on USFS lands in the Southern Sierra. As a result of this research, the Research Station has identified a connection between Fisher mortality and rodenticide used at illegal grow sites.

VIII. Deputy Attorney General's Report (INFORMATIONAL)

Christine Sproul, Deputy Attorney General, reminded Boardmembers that it is time to file Statement of Economic Interest Forms and that forms should be sent to Theresa Burgess in Auburn. Sproul also said that every couple of years Boardmembers need to take an ethics course and that Boardmembers should expect to get an email or notification about that requirement soon. Sproul said she continues to follow updates related to California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Sproul also said that she continues to watch legislation for any updates related to SNC as well.

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Boardmember Kirkwood asked staff to send a copy of what Boardmembers are required to file for the Statement of Economic Interest Form.

Boardmember Kirwan asked what the deadline for those forms would be.

Sproul said she would follow up with the Board and Theresa Burgess on the form deadline and the information needed to complete them.

IX. 2013-14 Healthy Forests/Abandoned Mine Lands Grant Awards (ACTION)

Branham noted that about half of the funds available in this grant round will be allocated if the projects proposed during this meeting are approved, and that staff anticipates bringing additional Abandoned Mine Lands projects to the Board for consideration in June. Branham introduced Mt. Lassen Area Manager Bob Kingman and Mt. Whitney Area Manager Julie Bear.

Kingman introduced the Plumas Community Energy Wood Processing Facility and presented the staff recommendation that the Board award a grant in the amount of \$350,000 to the Sierra Institute for Community and Environment to complete the project.

Kingman introduced the Sagehen Basin Old Forest Sensitive Species Habitat Restoration Project and presented the staff recommendation that the Board award a grant in the amount of \$349,140 to the National Forest Foundation to complete the project.

Kingman introduced the American River Canyon Shaded Fuel Break Project and presented the staff recommendation that the Board award a grant in the amount of \$288,206 to the City of Auburn Fire Department to complete the project. Kingman noted that this grant would compliment a past grant for Phase I funded by SNC.

Bear introduced the Soaproot Restoration Project and presented the staff recommendation that the Board award a grant in the amount of \$349,788 to the Sierra National Forest to complete the project. Bear noted that this project was developed by the Dinkey Creek Collaborative, and is a portion of a larger effort.

Public Comment:

Brett Storey, representing Placer County, said that he supports all four projects being considered by the Board, and that all of these projects are in the spirit of why the Sierra Nevada Conservancy is so valuable to the state. Storey said that the Sagehen Project would benefit Placer County's Cabin Creek Biomass Facility once it is constructed, and that the American River Shaded Fuelbreak would compliment efforts and funding that Placer County has invested in the American River Watershed in the past. He also said that Placer County and Placer County Water Agency will be contributing additional funds to the American River Shaded Fuelbreak.

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Jonathan Kusel, from the Sierra Institute for Community and Environment thanked the Board for considering the project and thanked Brett Story for his comments. He noted that the Sierra Institute is building on the work that Placer County has done. Kusel thanked SNC for the effort that Kingman and SNC Staff put in to develop and move the project forward.

Boardmember Kirkwood noted that the project proposal indicated that the facility would eventually be expanded to a 3MW power facility, and asked where in the expansion process the project currently was. Kusel said that SNC's funds would give Sierra Institute the ability to be ready for future expansions, and that the Sierra Institute is still developing the demand and financial model that will carry the project through future expansions.

Kevin Hanley, Auburn City Council and Chair of the Greater Auburn Fire Safe Council, supported the American River Shaded Fuelbreak and said that every dollar invested in the project will go a long way. He said that the fire department has developed partnerships to ensure that those funds are used efficiently. In addition, Hanley stated that the City and other partners have committed to invest in future maintenance of the project area.

ACTION: Boardmember Kirkwood moved and Boardmember Brissenden seconded a motion to (a) make findings that there is no substantial evidence that the Sagehen Forest Habitat Restoration Project (SNC 773), with mitigation measures, may have a significant effect on the environment and adopt the Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration and the related Mitigation Monitoring and reporting Program (b) make findings that there is no substantial evidence that the Soaproot Stewardship Project (SNC 786), with mitigation measures, may have a significant effect on the environment and adopt the Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration and the related Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (c) authorize the Executive Officer to file Notices of Exemption for the Plumas Community Energy Wood Processing Facility Project (SNC 780) and the American River Canyon Shaded Fuel Break Project (SNC 788); (d) authorize award of grants to each of the above listed projects for the amounts recommended by staff, and further authorize staff to enter into the necessary agreements for the recommended projects and to file Notices of Determination for the Sagehen and Soaproot Projects. The motion passed unanimously.

X. **SNC Grant #412 – Sequoia Riverlands Trust (ACTION)**

Braham said this is the first time staff has brought a grant agreement back to the Board for the approval of a scope change, and that it was necessary to bring the request to the Board because the changes were beyond the delegated authority.

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Bear introduced Bobby Kamansky, Mt. Whitney Area Representative, and Chris Moi from the Sequoia Riverlands Trust. Kamansky updated the Board on the most recent activities related to SNC grant #412, and described the scope change being recommended.

Boardmembers Kirkwood and Giacomini asked some clarifying questions as to the proximity of the properties being proposed for inclusion. Staff provided clarification as to the location and resource values of these properties.

Kirkwood asked that maps be included in the Board packet for all projects that the Board would be considering in the future.

Boardmember Brissenden asked if SNC had toured these properties during a past Board meeting. Kamansky said that SNC toured the Toppin Ranch, and not this property.

Chris Moi from Sequoia Riverlands Trust clarified that the two (2) of the new properties are adjacent to each other. He also said that this planning grant has been essential for capacity building within Sequoia Riverlands Trust, and thanked the Board for their consideration.

Boardmember Johnston echoed Kirkwood's request for maps.

ACTION: Boardmember Hunt moved and Boardmember Ishida seconded a motion to approve recommended changes to the current scope of work, deliverables, and extension of the project completion date for Sequoia Riverlands Trust SNC Grant #412. The motion passed unanimously.

XI. Sierra Nevada Geotourism (ACTION)

Kingman updated the Board on the Sierra Nevada Geotourism MapGuide Project and the associated mobile applications (apps). Kingman said that more than 5,700 people have downloaded the apps which are available for free to the public. Kingman described the recommendation that the Board authorize a grant of the two (2) mobile apps to the Sierra Business Council.

Brissenden asked when more print maps would be available. Kingman said that staff is working with the Office of State Publishing on a contract for the third reprint of the map, and that more maps should be available in May or June.

Public Comment:

Nicole Benter, Senior Program Director with the Sierra Business Council (SBC) thanked SNC for collaboration on the Geotourism Project. Benter said that SBC supports the action and looks forward to taking over the management of the apps to fulfill the project's mission.

ACTION: Boardmember Kirkwood moved and Boardmember Hunt seconded a motion to approve granting Sierra Business Council two mobile phone applications for management and maintenance for the Sierra Nevada Geotourism Project. The motion passed unanimously.

XII. Biomass Utilization Efforts (Informational)

Kim Carr, SNC Sustainability Specialist, discussed SNC's current activities related to supporting biomass utilization in the Sierra. Carr said that SNC is called out in the 2012 State Bioenergy Action Plan to support efforts in the Sierra related to getting small-scale forest bioenergy facilities up and operating in high fire severity areas. Carr mentioned a variety of barriers that make establishing facilities difficult such as attracting private funding, timing and availability of public funds, supply security, and environmental concerns related to past development of large facilities, among other things. Carr noted that SNC Staff are working to address those barriers in the Region. Carr said through SNC's involvement and dialogue, environmental groups have become more supportive of small-scale facilities and through negotiations with environmental groups both the Placer County and the Madera County projects have been able to move forward.

Branham acknowledged Carr's important role in helping to move projects forward, in particular her efforts in North Fork.

Kirkwood asked whether the Center for Biological Diversity (CBD) has staff in California. Carr said that CBD has an office in San Francisco.

Brissenden complimented Carr for her work, and noted that CBD had been an ally for many Off Highway Vehicles projects that Brissenden worked on with California State Parks.

Boardmember Giacomini asked that Carr keep her apprised of activities as they may apply to projects in the North Subregion.

XIII. Boardmembers' Comments

Boardmember Ishida said that he is glad to be back after six (6) years and said that when he first joined the Board the Conservancy was still developing goals and procedures. He said that in time SNC has proven itself as a successful entity to grade and score projects. Ishida said that two years ago the San Joaquin Valley Partnership, which is made up of the San Joaquin Valley counties from Stockton to Bakersfield, engaged the Delta counties and talked about water. Ishida said that the 12 counties identified a list of priority projects, some of which were part of the San Joaquin River settlement, but none of those have been funded. Ishida said that the group recently began meeting again to discuss a water bond and that the 12 counties have basically agreed that storage is the biggest issue in a water bond, that there is no better agency to administer funds for forest restoration than the SNC. He

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March 13, 2014

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said that the 12 counties would be putting together a white paper on their bond proposal, that it would be available within the month, and that SNC's input would be welcome.

Board Chair Kirwan encouraged Branham and Ishida to work together on the issue.

Giacomini said that she was looking forward to taking the white paper to her Board for discussion and noted that the Shasta County Board of Supervisors sent a letter weighing in on Senate Bill 848. She said that the way the bill seems to currently read, only urban disadvantaged communities would have access to funding, and that there are many rural disadvantaged communities that would be left out.

Ishida said that he wanted to extend the definition of "disadvantaged communities" not just to urban communities, but also to cities in rural areas.

Brissenden thanked Ishida for his compliments to staff and on SNC's strength in getting funding on the ground and asked how best to get the legislation to acknowledge the successes of the Conservancy's grant program.

XIV. Public Comments

Tom Hellmann representing the California Park and Recreation Society presented the SNC and SBC the 2013 Award of Excellence for Marketing and Communication for the Sierra Nevada Geotourism MapGuide Project.

Board Chair Kirwan announced that the next SNC Board meeting will be June 11-12th in Shasta County.

XV. Adjournment

Board Chair Kirwan adjourned the meeting at 11:32 AM.

Current Status-Budget

Administration staff is busy working on completing contracts, accruals and other year-end accounting functions. We are on track to spend 99 percent of our budget, keeping 1 percent as a reserve to cover any unexpected invoices from our control agencies. We are preparing the 2014-15 budget and will be ready to start making expenditures as soon as the budget is chaptered. Staff is also in the process of identifying external needs to complete the items in our 2014-15 Action Plan.

Current Status-Human Resources

Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) welcomed three new staff members: Danna Stroud, Sarah Campe, and Elissa Brown. Danna has been hired as a permanent full-time staff to serve as the Mt. Whitney Area Representative for Alpine, Mono, and Inyo Counties along with leading the Recreation and Tourism initiative. Danna has worked for us as a consultant and will be based out of our Bishop office. Her hire fills a position that was vacated by Julie Bear a few years ago. Sarah has been hired as a permanent intermittent part-time staff to serve as the Mt. Whitney Area Representative for Madera, Fresno, Tulare, and Kern Counties. Sarah was born and raised in Three Rivers and has most recently worked for the nonprofit Tulare Basin Wildlife Partners. Elissa has been hired as a permanent intermittent part-time staff to serve as SNC's Fund Development Coordinator. Elissa has worked for us as a consultant and has extensive experience writing, leveraging and obtaining grants.

Staffing Background

Since SNC's inception 10 years ago we have used a variety of resources to establish, maintain, and increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the organization. When SNC was created in 2004 the Department of Finance allocated 24 permanent positions. It took some time to identify what kind of expertise the SNC needed to implement its mission and fill these positions. Over the years we have had a gradual increase of permanent staff and filled the final 24th position in April 2012.

During SNC's startup we used personal services contracts, interagency agreements and quite a few retired annuitants to accomplish our work. We were required to drastically change the way we were getting work done in September 2012 when we received direction from the California Department of Human Resources (CalHR) to layoff all non-mission-critical retired annuitants. CalHR recommended we look at other alternatives for completing work such as hiring limited-term or permanent intermittent employees.

At this same time, the Department of Finance gave us the option to increase our temporary help salaries by moving money from our operating expenditures (O&E) budget. This shift in funding gave us the flexibility to hire limited-term and permanent intermittent staff instead of contracting out for services through our O&E budget.

Starting in the 2008-09 fiscal year SNC began using interagency agreements with two Resource Conservation Districts to meet various staffing needs where a certain

expertise was needed. Those agreements come to an end as of June 30, 2014, and SNC will largely meet those needs internally.

Finally, in October 2013 Assembly Bill 906 (Stats. 2013, Chpt. 744) was passed which increased the scrutiny on personal services contracts. All Departments are now required to notice the unions when they enter into a personal services contract. This has reinforced the need to bring critical expertise that supports our mission in house. Over the last two years our staff hires have brought the following expertise in house: Facilitation, Ecosystem Services, Exams, Benefits, Position Control, Grant Writing, Fund Development, Social Media, Website Hosting, Tourism and Recreation.

The chart below shows how SNC's staffing has evolved over the last 10 years:

Type of Staff	FY 05/06	FY 06/07	FY 07/08	FY 08/09	FY 09/10	FY 10/11	FY 11/12	FY 12/13	FY 13/14	FY 14/15
Permanent Full-time	2	6	8	21	23	23	23	24	24	24
Permanent Intermittent & Limited Term				2	4	4	4	7	9	9
Retired Annuitant		2	6	9	9	8	9	4	2	0
Resource Conservation District Contract				1	1	3	5	5	3	0
Total Staff*	2	8	14	33	37	38	41	40	38	33

****Although the total number of staff has decreased the number of hours worked by staff remains comparable.***

**2013-14 SNC EXPENDITURES AND ENCUMBRANCES
 Through March 31, 2014**

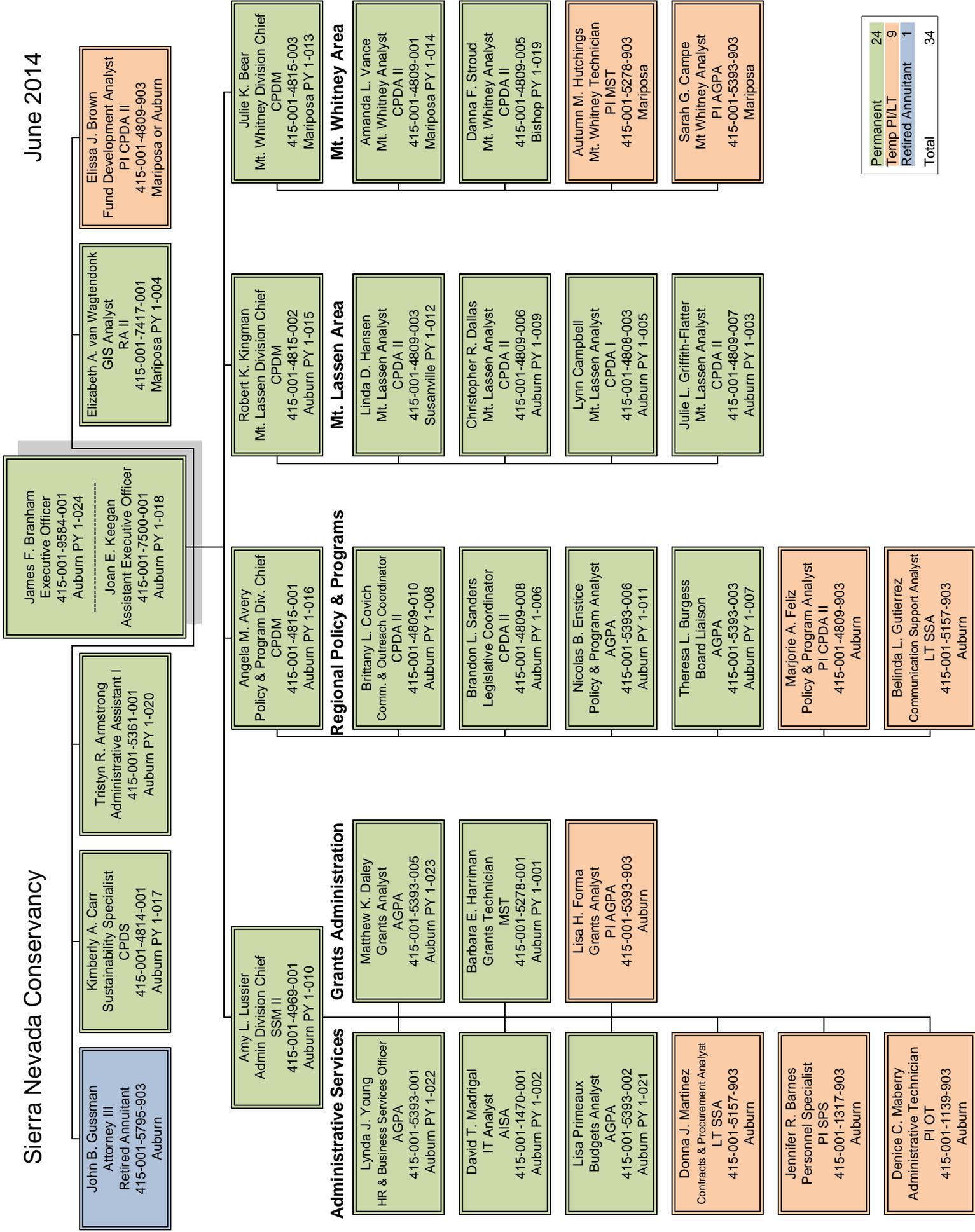
State Operations				
<i>Personal Services</i>	<i>Budgeted</i>	<i>Expended</i>	<i>Balance</i>	<i>% Spent</i>
SALARIES AND WAGES	2,054,591	1,268,797	785,794	62%
STAFF BENEFITS	806,637	479,107	327,530	59%
Personal Services, Totals	\$2,861,228	\$1,747,904	\$1,113,324	61%

<i>Operating Expenses & Equipment</i>	<i>Budgeted</i>	<i>Expended</i>	<i>Balance</i>	<i>% Spent</i>
GENERAL EXPENSE	271,312	176,294	95,018	65%
TRAVEL - IS	59,737	34,099	25,638	57%
TRAVEL - OS	-	0	0	0%
TRAINING	25,000	16,031	8,969	64%
FACILITIES	287,668	283,333	4,335	98%
UTILITIES	16,800	10,466	6,334	62%
CONTRACTS- INTERAGENCY AGREEMENT	653,969	413,156	240,813	63%
CONTRACTS- EXTERNAL	331,251	187,361	143,890	57%
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY	61,691	21,865	39,826	35%
EQUIPMENT	-	-	-	0%
OTHER ITEMS OF EXPENSE	25,196	18,075	7,121	72%
PRO RATA (control agency costs)	192,148	144,111	48,037	75%
Operating Expenses & Equipment, Totals	\$1,924,772	\$1,304,790	\$619,982	68%

Local Assistance				
<i>Appropriation</i>	<i>Budgeted</i>	<i>Expended</i>	<i>Balance</i>	<i>% Spent</i>
2007 Orig Appropriation; Re-ap.11/12 (13/14 Yr 3 of 3)	17,000,000	16,828,508	171,492	99%
2008 Orig Appropriation; Re-ap.11/12 (13/14 Yr 3 of 3)	17,000,000	15,696,553	1,303,447	92%
2009 Orig Appropriation; Re-ap.12/13 (13/14 Yr 2 of 3)	15,448,000	13,218,135	2,229,865	86%

	<i>Budgeted</i>	<i>Expended</i>	<i>Balance</i>	<i>% Spent</i>
State Operations	4,786,000	3,052,694	1,733,306	64%
Local Assistance	49,448,000	45,743,196	3,704,804	93%
SNC EXPENDITURES, TOTALS	\$54,234,000	\$48,795,890	\$5,438,110	90%

Agenda Item VIIa Attachment A



Permanent	24
Temp PI/LT	9
Retired Annuitant	1
Total	34

Background

Based on previous Board direction and with the goal of building understanding and acceptance among key decision-makers regarding the importance of the Sierra and the Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) to the State's long-term health, SNC Staff has been working to identify and support State policy that recognizes and invests in the Sierra through the SNC. Staff has also been utilizing key messages to produce educational tools and materials and to implement outreach and communications strategies to increase awareness of the Sierra Nevada Region's important role in the State's long-term environmental and economic well being.

Current Status

SNC Staff continues to track and provide input on issues and questions associated with legislative vehicles such as the water bond, Natural Resources Climate Improvement Program opportunities and other relevant bills.

Water Bond Overview

As of May 1st, there were no less than 10 water bond vehicles making their way through the Legislature. At the time of this writing, seven (7) were still active and making their way through the legislative process, while two (2) were held in committee and one (1) failed passage in committee but was granted reconsideration.

A debate about regional allocation versus direct allocation of funds to specific agencies such as Conservancies is of particular interest to the SNC. The debate is ongoing and the SNC has engaged in a meaningful way to assist the Legislature in navigating this concern with the goal of crafting solutions that work both for recipients of bond proceeds and the citizenry who will benefit from the actions those funds will facilitate.

Importantly, Assemblyman Anthony Rendon (D-Lakewood) amended one of his water bond bills (AB 2554) to include language recognizing the important statewide role the watersheds of the Sierra/Cascade region play in California's water future. In addition to the language, the bill would allocate \$50 million for activities such as those undertaken by the SNC.

Cap and Trade Overview

Legislation introduced by Assembly Member Mark Stone (D-Scotts Valley) and Senator Jim Beall (D-San Jose) may create opportunities and access to Cap and Trade revenue for important Sierra projects. AB 2348 (Stone) and SB 1268 (Beall) both propose the creation of a Natural Resources Climate Improvement Program under which Conservancies and the Wildlife Conservation Board would receive funding to conduct a range of activities to promote the sequestration of carbon, to reduce or avoid greenhouse gas emissions, and to advance the research needed to achieve the previous two goals. SNC is well positioned to help expend these funds based on our existing programs, the ease of replication of Sierra projects, the incorporation of numerous program goals to achieve multiple benefits, and our ongoing commitment to equitable geographic distribution of project funding.

Other Legislation of Interest

In early April, Senator Fran Pavley (D-Agoura Hills) amended SB 1259 into a bill which would mandate Department of Water Resources (DWR) to implement a variety of studies around the issue of sediment deposition in California's reservoirs and its impact on storage capacity. Specifically, the bill will require DWR to complete an initial study to evaluate cost-effective strategies for sediment removal relative to the costs of alternative methods of flood protection and water supply by January 1, 2017. SNC Staff and The Sierra Fund have raised this issue with Senator Pavley in discussions earlier this year and we are pleased she is addressing it. This coincides with SNC efforts to contract with United States Geological Survey (USGS) to conduct targeted studies around the sedimentation issue in hopes of quantifying storage loss in Sierra reservoirs.

Senator Kevin de León (D-Los Angeles) has introduced AB 1086 which would place a park bond on a future ballot. De León has expressed desire to not interfere with the impending water bond, but if the park bond were to go forward there is specific mention of the SNC and funding associated for forest work. It is encouraging to see the Senator (and the incoming President Pro Tem) acknowledging SNC as a viable means through which to implement a park bond.

Outreach and Education Materials and Efforts

Staff has been working to further understanding and awareness of Regional issues both internally and for our key audiences.

To that end, we continue to meet with members of the Legislature to reiterate the importance of investing in California's watersheds and the value of utilizing the SNC as the distribution mechanism for funding in the Region. Staff has held meetings with Assembly Members Brian Dahle and Anthony Rendon, and Senator Jim Nielsen, as well as staff in both houses. Additionally, we are working with partners to coordinate meetings with Sierra delegates to re-emphasize the need to support investment that protects and restores the forests in Sierra Nevada watersheds.

The SNC worked with Sierra Foothill Conservancy, Tuolumne River Trust, and LightHawk (a non-profit organization that provides flight services for no cost) to provide Assembly Members Dahle and Susan Talamantes-Eggman (D-Stockton) an aerial tour of the Rim Fire on May 22nd. The aerial tour may prove to be an effective education tool for policy makers and the SNC looks forward to expanding the partnership with LightHawk, through the Sierra Foothill Conservancy, in the future.

In an effort to create new, interesting ways to tell the Sierra/SNC story and make lasting impressions on our key audiences, staff has been developing two ideas for new methods of communication:

- The first is a series of interactive story maps targeted toward key policymakers in the Los Angeles and Bay Area regions. These maps, which are one part GIS data mapping, one part photos/images, and one part story, are an innovative and

visually-appealing way to convey the direct link between Sierra watersheds and specific downstream communities.

- Second, staff is in the process of developing a proposal to create and regularly utilize a Sierra Fire Season Blog on the SNC Web site. The Fire Blog would utilize Sierra fire events to share information about the wide-spread and long-term impacts that fire and forest management can have on all of California. Blog posts would utilize fires as the hook to get audience attention and then add educational information such as impacts on local communities; relatable facts such as emissions equivalents between fire and annual car emissions or gallons of airline fuel consumed; comparisons between the costs of suppression and the costs of prevention; or recreation, habitat, and watershed impacts.

In an effort to continue developing understanding of Regional issues, the SNC brought together representatives from the USGS, US Forest Service, Bureau of Reclamation, Department of Water Resources, Sierra Pacific Industries, Sierra Water Work Group, The Nature Conservancy and others with an interest in sedimentation to discuss sediment deposition in the Sierra Nevada. The conversation focused on better understanding current and upcoming research, as well as identifying the gaps in knowledge that need to be filled.

SNC partnered with The Nature Conservancy and the US Forest Service on a huge media push to announce the release of the Mokelumne Avoided Cost Analysis. The stories are still rolling in, but so far the release has been picked up by at least 21 media outlets including the Wall Street Journal, Capital Public Radio and many local papers. Please visit SNC's [SNC in the News](#) webpage to see the variety of coverage the SNC has received or to read some of the articles.

SNC's 6th Annual Great Sierra River Cleanup will take place on September 20th and preparations are in full swing. Staff has developed artwork, promotional materials, and coordinator resources, and is publicizing the Cleanup on our Web site and through social media. Outreach efforts to new and returning cleanup groups are ongoing and staff held cleanup coordinator training and a webinar in April. Sponsorship procurement efforts will continue through late June, but so far staff has secured commitments from the California Conservation Corps, Sierra Pacific Industries, Sierra Heritage Magazine, Sacramento Municipal Utility District, and Sierra Nevada Brewing Company.

Next Steps

June 26, 2014 is the last day for a legislative measure to qualify for the November General Election ballot. Until that deadline, SNC will continue to schedule meetings with legislators and look for other opportunities to advance their understanding of the value of the Sierra Nevada Region to the rest of the State and the importance relying on the SNC's Regional expertise to distribute funding in the Region.

Staff will also continue to consider and develop new and dynamic education tools and messages as well as to utilize the SNC website and social media avenues to connect

water users and policy makers to the critical Sierra Nevada watersheds that provide their water.

September, 2014 will mark the 10th Anniversary of the establishment of the SNC. Within that time the SNC has awarded more than \$50 million in grants, formed successful collaborative forest groups, established an annual Sierra-wide volunteer event, developed baseline tracking data for environmental, social, and economic conditions in the Sierra, and shared the Region's best geotouristic destinations with the world – just to mention a few. Today, the SNC continues to support the incredible efforts of our partners throughout the Region, and is still working to improve the economic, social, and environmental well-being of our natural and human communities. On the 10 year anniversary of our establishment, the SNC has an opportunity to continue raising the profile of the Sierra Nevada Region by highlighting all of these accomplishments. Staff will be considering ways to engage Boardmembers, partners and grantees to help tell our stories – possibly via Op Eds and our growing social media network.

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.

Background

In June 2013, the Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) Governing Board (Board) approved Grant Guidelines for the 2013-14 Grant Round. This will be the SNC's final grant round using funding from Proposition 84, The Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Bond Act of 2006. Staff released public notification of the SNC 2013-14 Grant Round on June 27, 2013. Estimated funding available for this grant round is approximately \$2.9 million.

This grant round has no final application due date. Applicants may contact SNC Staff at any time while adequate funding remains. Projects that have provided a complete grant application and that receive a minimum score of 85 out of 100 may be presented to the Board for approval.

At the December 2013 Board meeting, the Board authorized one grant in the amount of \$250,000. At the March 2014 Board meeting, four (4) projects totaling \$1.2 million were authorized. For the June 2014 meeting, three (3) projects totaling \$258,975 are being recommended to the Board for approval. Staff expects that the remainder of funds, approximately \$1.3 million, will be recommended for authorization at the September 2014 Board meeting (this does not include the \$1 million allocated for the Rim Fire Restoration effort).

Current Status

Staff has completed review of the following three projects and has found that they meet or exceed the threshold scoring level of 85 points:

- Project [791](#), Oro De Amador Removal Action Workplan
- Project [781](#), Camptonville Forest Biomass Business Center Feasibility Study
- Project [802](#), Upper Stevens Meadow Project

Staff is recommending Board approval of these three projects totaling \$258,975. Project specific information including project descriptions, maps and California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) documentation is provided in the attached Exhibit A to this item.

Attachments:

[Exhibit A](#) – Project Descriptions, Maps and CEQA Documentation

Recommendation

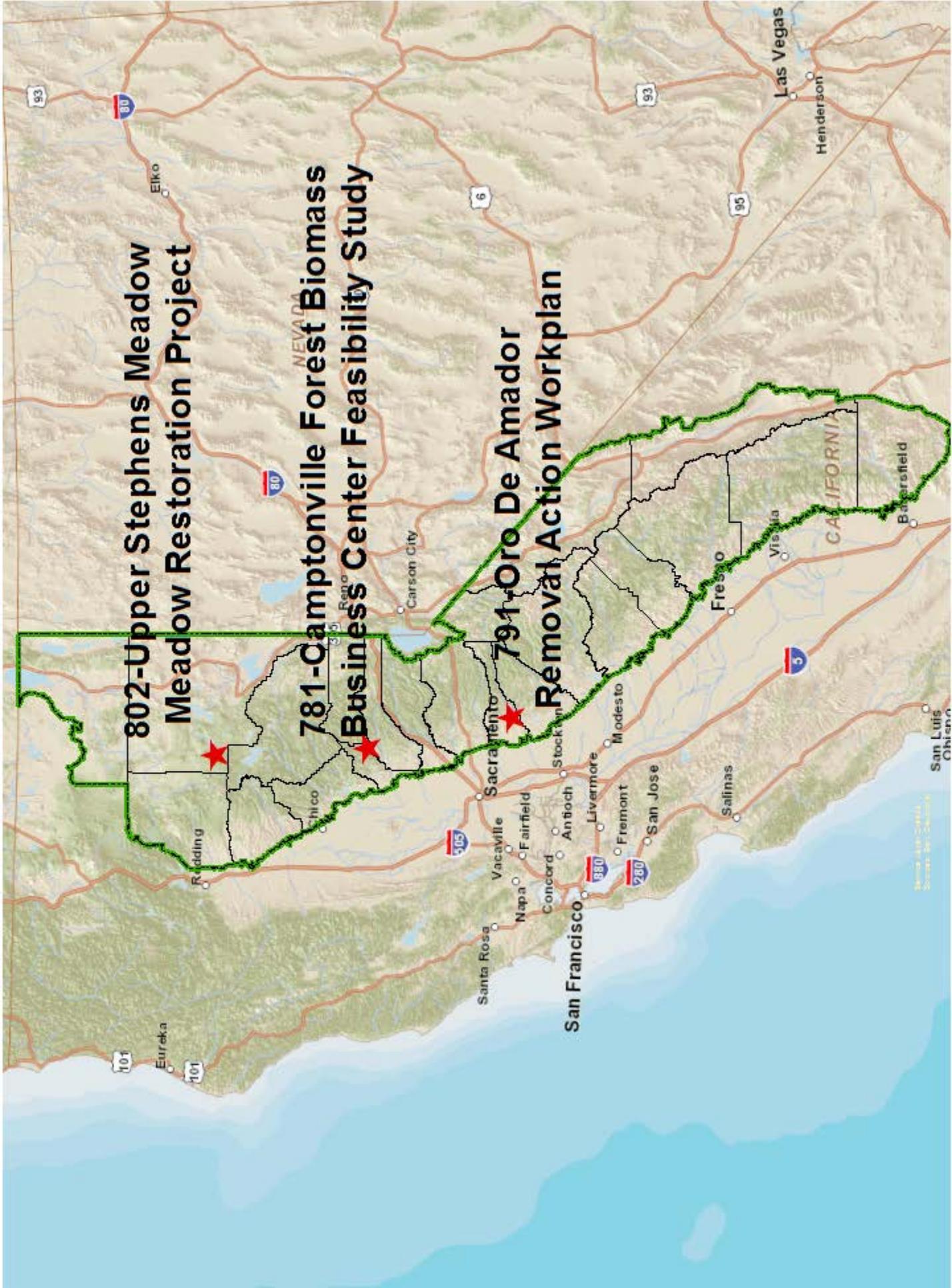
Staff recommends the Board (a) approve, and authorize the Executive Officer to file, Notices of Exemption for the Oro De Amador Removal Action Workplan Project (SNC 791); the Camptonville Forest Biomass Business Center Feasibility Study Project (SNC 781), and the Upper Stevens Meadow Restoration Project (SNC802); and (b) authorize a grant award to each of the above listed projects for the amounts recommended by staff, and further authorize staff to enter into the necessary agreements for the recommended projects.

**Agenda Item IX
2013-14 Healthy
Forests/Abandoned Mine Lands
Grant Awards
Exhibit A**

**802-Upper Stephens Meadow
Meadow Restoration Project**

**781-Camptonville Forest Biomass
Business Center Feasibility Study**

**791-Oro De Amador
Removal Action Workplan**



**STATE OF CALIFORNIA
SIERRA NEVADA CONSERVANCY**

**Sierra Nevada Conservancy Grant Program
Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control,
River and Coastal Protection Bond Act of 2006 (Proposition 84)**

Applicant: Camptonville Community Partnership (CCP)

Project Title: Camptonville Forest Biomass Business Center Feasibility Study

Subregion: Central

County: Yuba

SNC Funding: \$ 68,590.00

Total Project Cost: \$112,113.00

Application Number: 781

Final Score: 85

PROJECT SCOPE

The Camptonville Community Partnership (CCP) will contract with consultants to develop a detailed feasibility study for a bioenergy facility in Celestial Valley, Camptonville. This study will identify and evaluate fuel resource availability, siting and infrastructure issues, potential environmental impacts, transportation impacts, energy transmission and conversion technology options, and legislative and regulatory issues (including sale/use of energy and/or heat). The study will also address, financial and economic considerations such as costs and availability of obtaining biomass from forest thinning and hazardous fuel reduction projects on the Tahoe and Plumas National Forests. The feasibility study will assist in determining if there are any upfront “deal-killing” issues or “fatal flaws” with such a project. The study will be conducted in a manner to maximize the opportunity for future investment in a facility.

Completion of this study, and the future project that may result, is strongly aligned with the mission and goals of the Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) and Proposition 84 by facilitating increased treatment of forested lands to reduce the risks of catastrophic fire and the resulting impacts to water quality, air quality, wildlife habitat, and recreational use of public lands.

The proposed project site is on approximately 20-acres of land located off of State Highway 49 in Celestial Valley, about 2 miles south of the community of Camptonville. The site is the previous location of an operating sawmill, which closed in the 1990s. The site is zoned by Yuba County as “A/RR,” or Agriculture/Rural Residential. Industrial uses are allowed in this zoning designation, subject to a Conditional Use Permit (CUP). The

Yuba County Planning Department has confirmed that a small-scale biomass power plant is considered an allowable use with a CUP. Information gathered and included in the feasibility study would be useful in completing a future California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) analysis for a proposed biomass project at this site.

CCP will manage the feasibility study contract, including circulation of the Request For Proposal (RFP), selection and oversight of the vendor, and monitoring of project deliverables. CCP will also provide outreach to surrounding communities about the proposed bioenergy facility and the feasibility study, and coordinate with project stakeholders, including members of the Yuba Watershed Protection and Fire Safe Council. In addition, CCP will perform outreach to new stakeholders and existing and potential project partners, evaluate potential funding sources, publish and circulate the final feasibility study, and ensure detailed reporting of project performance to the SNC.

PROJECT SCHEDULE

DETAILED PROJECT DELIVERABLES	TIMELINE
Select Consultant to Prepare Feasibility Study	October 31, 2014
Conduct Community Outreach	December 31, 2015
Complete and Distribute Final Feasibility Study	November 30, 2015
6-Month Progress Reports	February 1, 2015 August 1, 2015
Final Report	February 1, 2016
FINAL PAYMENT/FINAL PAYMENT REQUEST	April 1, 2016

PROJECT COSTS

PROJECT BUDGET CATEGORIES	TOTAL SNC FUNDING
Direct*	\$64,260.00
Indirect**	\$1,100.00
Administrative***	\$3,230.00
GRAND TOTAL	\$68,590.00

* Direct: Direct costs are expenses necessary to acquire, construct, or to adapt property to a new or different use, or to improve property including land, buildings and equipment. The property/expense must have a useful life longer than one year.

** Indirect: Expenses involve ongoing operations, repair or maintenance costs, regardless of whether the repair or maintenance may last more than one year.

*** Administrative: Expenses associated with the administration of a project and may not exceed 15 percent of the total SNC grant request for direct and indirect costs.

PROJECT LETTERS SUPPORT/OPPOSITION

- Support
 - Yuba County
 - Yuba County Watershed and Fire Safe Council

PROJECT PERFORMANCE MEASURES

There are four Performance Measures common to all grants. In addition, grantees are required to include between one and three project-specific measures. Performance Measures listed here represent those proposed by applicants and may be modified through further discussion with SNC Staff.

- Number of Collaboratively Developed Plans and Assessments

**781-Camptonville Forest Biomass
Business Center Feasibility Study
Yuba County**

Camptonville

Now Bullards
Bar Reservoir

Dobbins

49

49

49

49

Notice of Exemption

Appendix E

To: Office of Planning and Research
PO Box 3044, 1400 Tenth Street, Room 212
Sacramento, CA 95812-3044

From: (Public Agency) Sierra Nevada Conservancy
11521 Blocker Drive, Suite 205
Auburn, CA 95603

Project Title: Camptonville Forest Biomass Business Center Feasibility Study (SNC 781)

Project Location – Specific:

The project is located on a former sawmill site at the end of Celestial Valley Road, approximately 0.75 mile northeast of the intersection of State Route (SR) 49 and Ridge Road, approximately 2 miles southwest of Camptonville, approximately 1.75 mile east of New Bullards Bar Reservoir, and approximately 11 miles north of Nevada City, surrounded mainly by Tahoe National Forest Land, in Yuba County, California.

Project Location – City: Camptonville

Project Location – County: Yuba

Description of Nature, Purpose and Beneficiaries of Project:

Camptonville Community Partnership, LLC is requesting \$68,590 in funding from the Sierra Nevada Conservancy's Proposition 84 Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Bond Act Grant Program for funding to develop a site-specific bioenergy (wood gasification) feasibility study and provide public outreach and communication in Yuba County. The proposed project is located on an approximately 30-acre parcel, which contained a sawmill that was in operation until the 1990s. The Yuba Biomass Feasibility Study conducted by TSS Consultants in December 2010, indicated that there is sufficient sustainable biomass available in the foothill region of Yuba County and the neighboring counties. The area surrounding the project site is mostly Tahoe National Forest land with Wildland Urban Interface due to private properties and communities in the general region. The area has been identified by the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) as an area in need of fuel reduction and forest thinning efforts, due to high fuel load and extreme fire risk, and thus could help to provide sustainable woody forest biomass to fuel a bioenergy facility. The proposed project would prepare the site-specific feasibility study for a three (3) megawatt (MW) biomass facility that would use wood gasification technology. The proposed project would also develop materials describing the opportunities of a biomass facility at the proposed location. The feasibility study would identify and evaluate fuel resource availability, siting and infrastructure issues, conversion technology options, legislative and regulatory context, and financial and economic considerations to determine the viability of a 3-MW biomass facility at the former sawmill location. In addition, the feasibility study would identify environmental factors and the next steps for the project, including the appropriate CEQA process (i.e., appropriate technical studies and environmental document) in order to fully identify and analyze the project-specific effects on environmental resources within the area. The purpose of the project is to prepare a feasibility study addressing fuel availability in the area, economic opportunities of a biomass-to-energy enterprise, site improvements and infrastructure, environmental factors, and environmental documents required for the CEQA process in order to develop a 3-MW facility.. The direct benefit of the proposed project includes identifying the viability of the 3MW biomass facility and identifying the environmental factors that would require evaluation of impacts to environmental resources. The ultimate benefit of the 3MW biomass facility includes providing economic opportunity, providing fuel reduction within the surrounding forest and Wildland Urban Interface areas. This would ultimately promote healthier forests and reduce wildfire severity.

Name of Public Agency Approving Project: Sierra Nevada Conservancy

Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project: Camptonville Community Partnership, LLC

Exempt Status: *(check one)*

- Ministerial (Sec. 21080(b)(1); 15285);
- Declared Emergency (Sec 21080(b)(3); 15269(2));
- Emergency Project (Sec. 21080(b)(4); 15269(b)(c);
- Categorical Exemption. State type and section number: _____
- Statutory Exemptions. State code number: Section 15262 "Feasibility and Planning Studies"

Reasons why project is exempt:

The proposed Camptonville Forest Biomass Business Center Feasibility Study Project is statutorily exempt from the provisions of CEQA pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15262, a project involving only feasibility or planning studies for possible future actions which have not yet been approved or funded. The project consists of collecting data to determine the biomass-to-energy conversion technology options, fuel availability, identifying siting and infrastructure needs, economic opportunities, and public education and outreach. No significant adverse impacts to natural resources will occur as a result of the project.

Lead Agency Contact Person: Matthew Daley

Area Code/Telephone/Extension: (530) 823-4698

Signature: _____ Date: _____ Title: Executive Officer
Jim Branham

Date Received for Filing at OPR:

Revised 2005

**STATE OF CALIFORNIA
SIERRA NEVADA CONSERVANCY**

**Sierra Nevada Conservancy Grant Program
Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control,
River and Coastal Protection Bond Act of 2006 (Proposition 84)**

Applicant: City of Jackson

Project Title: Oro De Amador Removal Action Workplan

Subregion: Project South Central

County: Amador

SNC Funding: \$75,000.00

Total Project Cost: \$75,000.00

Application Number: 791

Final Score: 87

PROJECT SCOPE

The Oro De Amador Removal Action Workplan Project will allow the City of Jackson to complete a Removal Action Workplan (RAW) on a 159 acre parcel of abandoned mine lands adjacent to the City. The purpose of the Removal Action Workplan is to present relevant information for evaluating removal/management alternatives for the mine waste tailings in order to protect human health and nearby waterways. This property was purchased by the City of Jackson in 2006 and is slated to be used for a park, recreation purposes and open space after additional remediation is completed. It was previously owned by Kennedy Mine and Milling Company and used for gold mine tailings processing and storage which makes it a “brownfield” and potentially eligible for Federal Environmental Protection Agency(EPA) Brownfield Cleanup grants.

The City has been working with the California Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) on soil contamination sampling projects and the completion of this RAW is the required next step between the previously completed assessments and the clean-up phase.

The City plans to seek implementation funding again through Brownfield grants upon completion of the RAW. They have been successful in obtaining grant funding for previous park development projects through the State’s Housing and Community Development Program and Caltrans and plan to seek additional funds from these sources and others to eventually develop the property. This will include preparing a California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) document, for which the City can act as Lead and completing all of the required permits.

Required testing of storm water runoff under the Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan has routinely shown elevated levels of toxic materials, including arsenic and a DTSC Targeted Site investigation found mercury and chromium concentrations in the lakebed area that warrant further consideration. All appropriate best management practices will be evaluated for implementation to minimize the potential for runoff carrying eroded mine waste materials offsite and from entering surface waters. A RAW includes a site investigation, health based risk assessment, removal action goals, removal action alternatives and analysis, and final recommendations for any required clean-up of the property. DTSC is responsible for approving the completed RAW.

The community has been supportive of this project since the City acquired the property in 2006. A local group of citizens formed the “Oro De Amador Study Group” to assist the City with clearance of the access restrictions placed upon the property by DTSC. This group includes local recreation enthusiasts, soils engineers and other local community members. Pending completion of future planning and environmental review processes, it is anticipated that the park may include mixed-use baseball/soccer fields, softball fields, pedestrian/bike trails, a skateboard park, children’s playground areas and vast areas of open space for passive recreation.

PROJECT SCHEDULE

DETAILED PROJECT DELIVERABLES	TIMELINE
Issue Request for Qualifications for a contractor to complete the Removal Action Workplan (RAW)	July 31, 2014
Select Contractor	September 15, 2014
Progress Report	January 31, 2015
Draft RAW completion and delivery to DTSC	March 30, 2015
Review of RAW by DTSC	April 1 – June 30, 2015
Final Removal Action Workplan	June 30, 2015
Final Report	July 31, 2015
FINAL PAYMENT/FINAL PAYMENT REQUEST	September 1, 2015

PROJECT COSTS

PROJECT BUDGET CATEGORIES	TOTAL SNC FUNDING
Direct*	\$75,000.00
Indirect**	0
Administrative***	0
GRAND TOTAL	\$75,000.00

* Direct: Direct costs are expenses necessary to acquire, construct, or to adapt property to a new or different use, or to improve property including land, buildings and equipment. The property/expense must have a useful life longer than one year.

** Indirect: Expenses involve ongoing operations, repair or maintenance costs, regardless of whether the repair or maintenance may last more than one year.

*** Administrative: Expenses associated with the administration of a project and may not exceed 15 percent of the total SNC grant request for direct and indirect costs.

PROJECT LETTERS SUPPORT/OPPOSITION

- Support
 - Department of Toxic Substances Control
 - Oro De Amador Study Group
 - Amador County Recreation Agency
 - Amador Citizens for Transportation Options
 - Amador County East Little League

PROJECT PERFORMANCE MEASURES

There are four Performance Measures common to all grants. In addition, grantees are required to include between one and three project-specific measures. Performance Measures listed here represent those proposed by applicants and may be modified through further discussion with SNC Staff.

- Number of collaboratively developed plans and assessments
- Percent of pre-project and planning efforts resulting in project implementation

791-Oro De Amador Removal Action Workplan Amador County



Notice of Exemption

Appendix E

To: Office of Planning and Research
PO Box 3044, 1400 Tenth Street, Room 212
Sacramento, CA 95812-3044

From: (Public Agency) Sierra Nevada Conservancy
11521 Blocker Drive, Suite 205
Auburn, CA 95603

Project Title: Oro De Amador Removal Action Work Plan (SNC 791)

Project Location – Specific:

The project is located on 159 acres (Assessor Parcel Numbers (APNs) 02-070-031, 02-070-037, 020-070-038, 020-070-040, and 020-020-040) between North Main Street and New York Ranch Road, north of Court Street, approximately 0.75 mile northeast of the intersection of State Route (SR) 49 and SR-88, in close proximity to downtown, within the city of Jackson, in Amador County, California.

Project Location – City: Jackson

Project Location – County: Amador

Description of Nature, Purpose and Beneficiaries of Project:

City of Jackson is requesting \$75,000 in funding from the Sierra Nevada Conservancy's Proposition 84 Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Bond Act Grant Program for funding to develop a Removal Action Workplan for removing contaminants from an abandoned mine property in order to protect human health and waters of the State in the City of Jackson, Amador County.

The proposed project site was once used by the Kennedy Fold Mine for a tailings disposal area in the City of Jackson, Amador County. The property was acquired by the City of Jackson in December 2006 from a subsidiary to Chubb Insurance Group. The subsidiary to Chubb Insurance Group determined that it was not cost-effective to retain the site for residential or commercial development. Thus, the City obtained the property to provide public access to the area for both active and passive recreational uses. While the subsidiary to Chubb Insurance Group owned the property, the Department of Toxic Substance Control (DTSC) identified the property as "trespasser only" and restricted the public access. The City has since worked with DTSC to identify potential hazards on the property, mainly concerning abandoned mines and high levels of arsenic. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) completed a Targeted Brownfield Assessment report in 2008 and the DTSC completed a Targeted Site Investigation report in 2009; both reports identified various areas where the arsenic concentrations on the project site were higher than acceptable levels.

The proposed project would prepare a Removal Action Workplan for removal and management alternatives for the mine waste tailings sand that is located on the property, put there by the Kennedy Gold Mine. The Removal Action Workplan would provide a site investigation, health based risk assessment, removal action goals, removal action alternatives and analysis, and final recommendations for any required clean-up of the property. The Removal Action Workplan provides the link between the previously completed assessments and applying for the EPA's Brownfield Grant program for the clean-up work. The workplan would describe/identify appropriate best management practices to help minimize the potential for runoff carrying eroded mine waste materials offsite and from entering surface waters. The Removal Action Workplan would also consider alternatives which may include locating materials of concern away from drainages and placing the materials above the groundwater table to protect the waters of the State. The proposed project is located immediately north of downtown Jackson, on an open space "abandoned mine lands" property that has potential to provide the City with open space and recreational lands. The completion of the Removal Action Workplan would identify the actions needed for purposes of human health and safety and to protect the waters of the State from contamination. The purpose of the project is to identify recommended mine tailing and

hazardous material removal goals and best management practices. The benefits of the project include identifying best management practices necessary to remove hazardous materials associated with historic mine tailings (i.e., cyanide, arsenic, and other metals). This would allow the City to apply for EPA Brownfield Grant program funding in order to help prepare environmental documentation for CEQA compliance and to fund the clean-up work identified in the Removal Action Workplan. This would ultimately promote healthier waters of the State, as well as public health and safety.

Name of Public Agency Approving Project: Sierra Nevada Conservancy
Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project: City of Jackson

Exempt Status: *(check one)*

- Ministerial (Sec. 21080(b)(1); 15285);
- Declared Emergency (Sec 21080(b)(3); 15269(2));
- 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: _____

Reasons why project is exempt:

The proposed Oro De Amador Removal Action Work Plan Project is categorically exempt from the provisions of CEQA pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15306, Class 6, which permits basic data collection, research, and resource evaluation activities for information gathering purposes or as part of a study leading to an action which a public agency has not yet approved, adopted, or funded. The project consists of collecting data to determine the health based risks, removal action goals, removal action alternatives, and final recommendations for any required clean-up of the property. No significant adverse impacts to natural resources will occur as a result of the project.

Lead Agency Contact Person: Matthew Daley
Area Code/Telephone/Extension: (530) 823-4698

Signature: _____ Date: _____ Title: Executive Officer
Jim Branham

Date Received for Filing at OPR:

Revised 2005

**STATE OF CALIFORNIA
SIERRA NEVADA CONSERVANCY**

**Sierra Nevada Conservancy Grant Program
Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control,
River and Coastal Protection Bond Act of 2006 (Proposition 84)**

Applicant: Lassen Land and Trails Trust

Project Title: Upper Stevens Meadow Project

Subregion: North

County: Lassen

SNC Funding: \$115,385.00

Total Project Cost: \$123,000.00

Application Number: 802

Final Score: 90

PROJECT SCOPE

The Upper Stevens Meadow Restoration Project is located in western Lassen County on privately-owned land surrounded by the Lassen National Forest. The Lassen Land and Trails Trust (LLTT) owns a conservation easement on the property and will complete the project to improve the hydrologic function of approximately one mile of Pine Creek and 90-acres of montane meadow. This will be accomplished by removing encroaching lodgepole pine from the meadow to reduce competition for water and nutrients by native meadow species and will lengthen time for availability of groundwater to support natural stream flows. Pine creek is the primary tributary to Eagle Lake and is critical habitat for the Eagle Lake Rainbow Trout.

Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) grant funds will leverage other investments and in-kind work from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the U.S. Forest Service (USFS), Trout Unlimited and the landowner to remove encroaching lodgepole pine. All forest material removed during this project will be used for bio-energy production or for the construction of barrier fencing on the Modoc Line Rail Trail Project, partially funded by a previous grant from the SNC. The project has been included as an element of an approved Non-Industrial Timber Management Plan which includes measures to protect water quality, cultural resources, and sensitive/special status plant and wildlife species on the property.

The USFS Eagle Lake Ranger Station will conduct post-project monitoring to evaluate the effects of conifer removal on understory plant communities over time, and Trout Unlimited will conduct habitat typing surveys. Monitoring data will be used to compare similar projects completed along Pine Creek on National Forest land. The Forest Service prepared a Categorical Exclusion to satisfy National Environmental Protection Act

(NEPA) requirements for work they will complete on this and other nearby related projects.

PROJECT SCHEDULE

DETAILED PROJECT DELIVERABLES	TIMELINE
Establish monitoring protocols and photo points	June-July 2014
Remove encroaching lodgepole pine within the meadow area.	August – November 2014
Final clean-up and removal of lodgepole seedlings by hand-pulling	June – August 2015 August 2016
Conduct post-treatment monitoring	August 2015 August 2016
Progress Reports	February 28, 2015 August 30, 2015 February 28, 2016 August 30, 2016
FINAL PAYMENT/FINAL PAYMENT REQUEST	December 31, 2016

PROJECT COSTS

PROJECT BUDGET CATEGORIES	TOTAL SNC FUNDING
Direct*	\$106,000.00
Indirect**	\$5,560.00
Administrative***	\$3,825.00
GRAND TOTAL	\$115,385.00

* Direct: Direct costs are expenses necessary to acquire, construct, or to adapt property to a new or different use, or to improve property including land, buildings and equipment. The property/expense must have a useful life longer than one year.

** Indirect: Expenses involve ongoing operations, repair or maintenance costs, regardless of whether the repair or maintenance may last more than one year.

*** Administrative: Expenses associated with the administration of a project and may not exceed 15 percent of the total SNC grant request for direct and indirect costs.

PROJECT LETTERS SUPPORT/OPPOSITION

- Lassen National Forest, Eagle Lake Ranger District
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife, Partners for Wildlife
- Rosenberg Trust
- UC Cooperative Extension; Lassen County

PROJECT PERFORMANCE MEASURES

There are four Performance Measures common to all grants. In addition, grantees are required to include between one and three project-specific measures. Performance Measures listed here represent those proposed by applicants and may be modified through further discussion with SNC Staff.

- Number of people reached
- Dollar value of resources leveraged for the Sierra Nevada
- Linear feet of streambank protected or restored
- Acres of land improved or restored

802-Upper Stephens Meadow Meadow Restoration Project Lassen County



Notice of Exemption

Appendix E

To: Office of Planning and Research
PO Box 3044, 1400 Tenth Street, Room 212
Sacramento, CA 95812-3044

From: (Public Agency) Sierra Nevada Conservancy
11521 Blocker Drive, Suite 205
Auburn, CA 95603

Project Title: Upper Stevens Meadow Restoration Project (SNC 802)

Project Location – Specific:

The project is located on a 640-acre property (Assessor Parcel Numbers (APNs) 085-080-06) in upper Stevens Meadow, immediately south of Forest Route 31N36, approximately four miles west of State Route (SR) 44, approximately 16 miles west of Eagle Lake, approximately 16 miles north of Lake Almanor, approximately 16.5 miles northeast of Chester, and approximately 28 miles northwest of Susanville, in Lassen County, California.

Project Location – City: Susanville and Chester

Project Location – County: Lassen

Description of Nature, Purpose and Beneficiaries of Project:

The Lassen Land and Trails Trust is requesting \$115,385 in funding from the Sierra Nevada Conservancy's Proposition 84 Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Bond Act Grant Program to implement the removal of encroaching lodgepole pine on approximately 90 acres of the 640-acre property along Pine Creek within Upper Stevens Creek Meadow in Lassen County. The proposed project would remove encroaching lodgepole pine using both mechanical and hand treatment methods. Mechanical removal of lodgepole pine trees would take place on approximately 20 acres. On the remaining 70 acres, the lodgepole pine trees would be harvested using hand treatment methods. The lodgepole trees would be used for a zigzag fence. Some of the trees would be chipped and transported to a biomass energy facility; however, these activities (chipping and transporting to a biomass energy facility) would provide off-set costs and is not part of the proposed project. The encroaching lodgepole pine threatens to impair the plant community through altered hydrology, shade, and changing soil composition. The loss of the meadow would impact Pine Creek, and ultimately Eagle Lake, by increasing water speed, erosion and sediment loads, flooding events, and would alter the native plant communities along the length of the stream. Therefore, by removing the encroaching lodgepole pine trees, the proposed project would maintain the native meadow plant community, protect the vegetation along the banks of Pine Creek, and would improve water quality and wildlife habitat.

The project site is subject to an approved Non-industrial Timber Management Plan which contains silvicultural prescriptions (timber harvest requirements) and provides protective measures for stream zones, cultural resources and special status plant and wildlife species. Any work within the watercourse and lake protection zone (WLPZ) would include hand treatments and would be seasonally limited. No cultural resources are within the proposed project area. The proposed project area provides some habitat for State and Federal special status species; however, as part of the treatment activities, pre-treatment surveys would identify plant and wildlife special status species in the treatment areas. If special status plant species are identified, they would be flagged and avoided. If special status wildlife species are identified, a buffer surrounding their activity locations would be provided and treatment activities would occur outside that buffer, allowing the treatment methods to avoid wildlife special-status species.

The purpose of the proposed project is to restore and maintain the native meadow plant community in order for the montane meadow to function properly. In a properly functioning meadow, the native sedges, willows and other species stabilize the stream bank and act as sponges to keep water available late into the season. The loss of streamside vegetation leads to stream incisions, which in turn leads to a lower water table, further altering the vegetative

community. Protection of the meadow would ultimately provide healthier meadows, healthier streams, and healthier watersheds, and would protect existing natural resources from being altered by encroaching lodgepole pine and associated habitat degradation.

Name of Public Agency Approving Project: Sierra Nevada Conservancy

Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project: Lassen Land and Trails Trust

Exempt Status: *(check one)*

- Ministerial (Sec. 21080(b)(1); 15285);
- Declared Emergency (Sec 21080(b)(3); 15269(2));
- Emergency Project (Sec. 21080(b)(4); 15269(b)(c));
- Categorical Exemption. State type and section number: Section 15304, "Minor Alterations to Land"
- Statutory Exemptions. State code number: _____

Reasons why project is exempt:

The proposed Upper Stevens Meadow Restoration Project is categorically exempt from the provisions of CEQA pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15304, Class 4, which permits minor public or private alterations in the condition of the land, water, and/or vegetation which do not involve removal of healthy, mature, scenic trees except for forestry or agricultural purposes. The project consists of minor land alterations (mechanical and hand treatments of encroaching lodgepole pine) in support of maintaining and/or improving the long-term viability of the montane meadow, including its hydrologic function. The proposed project is intended to improve the habitat quality and function of the montane meadow to help sustain forest and watershed health and contains measures to protect water quality, special status plant and animal species, and cultural resources in the project area. No significant adverse impacts to natural or cultural resources will occur as a result of the project.

Lead Agency Contact Person: Matthew Daley

Area Code/Telephone/Extension: (530) 823-4698

Signature: _____ Date: _____ Title: Executive Officer
Jim Branham

Date Received for Filing at OPR:

Revised 2005

Background

In September 2011, the Board adopted a new Strategic Plan, which establishes objectives for the Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) within five (5) areas of focus and lays out the strategies the organization will employ in meeting those objectives. The five areas of focus are:

- Healthy Forests;
- Preservation of Ranches and Agricultural Lands;
- Watershed Protection and Restoration;
- Promotion of Sustainable Tourism and Recreation; and,
- Long-term Effectiveness of the SNC

Meeting Strategic Plan objectives requires the organization to take a number of specific actions each year; these actions are included in an annual Action Plan. The Board has approved two Action Plans to date: one for 2012-13 and one for 2013-14. At the end of each fiscal year, staff report to the Board on what has been accomplished relative to the Action Plan over the course of the year.

Current Status

The attached report details what the SNC has accomplished relative to the 2013-14 Action Plan (see Attachment A). Accomplishments are tied to the individual actions that the SNC had planned to undertake in the 2013-14 fiscal year under each project or initiative.

The report reflects significant achievement on the part of the SNC in 2013-14 on a number of efforts important to the Region. It should be noted, however, that progress continues to be slow under two of the projects due to the needs and constraints of our partners on the projects, which are beyond the control of the SNC: The Mount Whitney Fish Hatchery Project and the Stewardship Council Project.

Next Steps

In addition to providing this report to the Board, staff will look for opportunities to share information more broadly on the important contributions we made to the Region in 2013-14. Further, work related to all of these efforts (with the exception of the Sierra Nevada Systems Indicators Project which has been completed) will continue into 2014-15 as reflected in the new draft Action Plan under Agenda Item XI.

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 X
Review of 2013-14 Action Plan
Accomplishments
Attachment A

2013-14

Action Plan Accomplishments



SIERRA NEVADA
CONSERVANCY

May 2014

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The following represent accomplishments under each of the major initiatives and projects undertaken by the Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) in accordance with the 2013-14 Action Plan approved by the SNC Governing Board in June 2013. Accomplishments are tied to the individual actions that the SNC had planned to undertake in the 2013-14 fiscal year under each project or initiative.

Grant Program

Action Planned: Implement the 2013-14 Proposition 84 grant round including reaching out to stakeholders and responding to inquiries to the request for proposal, project identification, evaluation and approval, agreement development and project implementation.

What was accomplished:

- Released Grant Guidelines and Grant Application Packet for the 2013-14 Grant Round.
- Scheduled to approve projects totaling \$2.0 million by the June 2014 Board meeting with an anticipated \$700,000 to be approved by the Board in September.

Action Planned: Close out 35 current grant projects.

What was accomplished:

- Closed out 23 grant projects and extended 12 grant projects.

Action Planned: Provide timely and accurate response to any bond reporting and audit requests received and update the California Strategic Growth Plan Bond Accountability website and the State Conservation Easement Database as required in Executive Order S-02-07.

What was accomplished:

- Responded to ten Department of Finance (DOF) Grantee Audits; currently awaiting draft findings.
- Responded to all bond reports and cash flow drills using the Agency Bond Consolidated reporting System (ABCRS).
- Continued to update the Bond Accountability website.

Action Planned: In the event new funding comes forward, plan efforts will be undertaken to implement a new grant round during this fiscal year.

What was accomplished:

- \$1 million was returned from a previously awarded grant project, which was reallocated to the Rim Fire Restoration focus area; anticipate Board approval of specific grant awards during 2014-15.
-

Sierra Nevada Forest and Community Initiative (SNFCI)

Action Planned: Provide funding for projects that meet SNC criteria for healthy forests in the 2013-14 grant round.

What was accomplished:

- Approximately \$1.2 million in grant awards for projects that reduce the risk of catastrophic wildfire and improve forest health was approved by the Board in March and \$183,975 in grants will be brought to the Board for approval at the June Board meeting. Additional projects will be brought to the Board in 2014-15.

Action Planned: Continue to support local collaborative efforts to develop projects consistent with SNFCI objectives. In the case of collaboratives initiated or heavily supported by the SNC, this will include building in measures to ensure long-term sustainability of the group as SNC's support lessens.

What was accomplished:

- The SNC continued its involvement in a number of successful local collaborative efforts, including but not limited to the following:
 - The SNC provided funding and coordination of two Rim Fire technical restoration workshops designed to provide scientifically based input to the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) in the development of post-fire activities. This recovery effort is unprecedented in its scale and level of destruction, and the workshops were critical in assisting the USFS in moving expeditiously in the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process, while ensuring adequate input from those concerned about the condensed planning and comment periods.
 - The Sierra National Forest was given the annual Region 5 Regional Forester's Honor Awards for the Whiskey Ridge Ecological Restoration Project. Collaborative process guidance and facilitation was provided by SNC Staff and was an outgrowth of the Sustainable Forests and Communities Collaborative (SFCC), a collaborative in eastern Madera and Fresno Counties.
 - Through transitional funding and partnerships the SFCC no longer relies on the SNC for facilitation and is functioning as fully independent group. The SNC has transitioned the Amador-Calaveras Consensus Group (ACCG) into more independent member facilitation through a similar approach.

Action Planned: Work with the SNFCI Regional Coordinating Council (Coordinating Council), the USFS, Tribal Entities, other state agencies, and key stakeholders in embracing opportunities and reducing barriers to increased ecological restoration in forested areas, with a focus on strong collaboration and improving the local economies and social well-being.

What was accomplished:

- After a series of in-depth discussions with the Coordinating Council, USFS and other partners, the following focus areas were identified as high priority

areas with the most potential for increasing pace and scale of forest restoration:

- Increase the use of fire on the landscape as a forest management tool and restoration method;
 - Encourage landscape level treatments/landscape size and scale processes;
 - Creation of new and protection of existing infrastructure to process more wood, including biomass, in a way that keeps benefit in local communities;
 - Identify and implement contracting tools to maximize local economic and social benefits from restoration activities; and
 - Explore the potential of advances in technology to allow mechanical treatments on steep slopes currently not available for mechanical treatment. (Work in this focus area has been well underway for over a year, including field trips with critical USFS staff to see some of these treatments firsthand.)
- Each area has been assigned a team including Coordinating Council members and one USFS staff. The USFS Region 5 leadership has made a firm commitment to providing the staff required to make real progress on these issues, and is also meeting with the Coordinating Council's Policy Workgroup on a quarterly basis to ensure this work continues to move forward at a high priority level.

Action Planned: Work with the Coordinating Council and the USFS to develop the Leadership Intent for Ecological Restoration Implementation Plan, as well as continuing to identify and implement ideas, actions and opportunities to increase the pace and scale of ecological restoration on our forests.

What was accomplished:

- As the Coordinating Council and USFS teams move forward in the five focus areas described above, they will be playing a critical role on a regional, state and local level, affecting policy and capacity. These actions effectively step down the Region 5 FS leadership Intent into specific actions, one of the key long-term projects of the Coordinating Council.

Action Planned: Provide facilitation and participation in the Southern Sierra Fisher Conservation Strategy development effort.

What was accomplished:

- SNC Staff serve on its Core Support Team, as well as the Inter-Agency Leadership Team for this effort. SNC is leading public outreach and involvement, including crafting key communication messages and hosting the first of two public meetings to keep interested stakeholders engaged and informed. This effort will conclude by December 2014, with the finalization and rollout of the Conservation Strategy and Decision Support System.

Action Planned: Participate in various efforts to promote policy changes and investment in support of SNFCI objectives, including but not limited to the Biomass Working Group, Sierra Cascade Dialogue (SCD) and the US Forest Plan Revision process.

What was accomplished:

- SNC Staff continues to serve on the SCD’s Steering Committee.
- Information collected from the SCD sessions was used to inform the “need for change” document for Forest Plan Revision, whose contents are important for the national forests within the SNC Region. SNC also provided significant support to establish remote broadcast of SCD sessions to the eastern Sierra, allowing for more eastside residents to participate.
- See Biomass Utilization item below for more information regarding accomplishments related to the Biomass Working Group.

Biomass Utilization

The SNC was identified in the California 2012 Bioenergy Action Plan as the primary state agency responsible for pursuing funding for forest bioenergy research and implementation and to assist communities with the development of community-scaled projects. To fulfill these goals and responsibilities, the SNC had planned to complete the following actions under this initiative by June 2014:

Action Planned: Provide funding for projects that meet SNC criteria for healthy forests in the 2013-14 grant round.

What was accomplished:

- SNC awarded several grants to support the planning of forest bioenergy projects.

Action Planned: Continue to provide technical assistance and funding support, as well as identify additional funding sources, for projects in various stages of development within the Region. Under the Bioenergy Action Plan, the SNC will provide a limited level of assistance to projects outside the Region.

What was accomplished:

- SNC is tracking and in some cases providing direct support to about 10 bioenergy projects that are in the planning stages. The project located in North Fork (Madera County) is the furthest along in planning and therefore has served as a primary demonstration project to pave the way for others to follow. SNC is providing direct support to the project to develop a 10-year stewardship contract that can help guarantee a consistent supply of biomass for the facility. In addition, SNC is establishing relationships with private investors to encourage them to invest in bioenergy projects. A financial roundtable was convened in May 2014 to present opportunities to representatives from the private sector and help project proponents to better understand how to develop projects to better attract private investment.

Action Planned: Continue to work with other agencies (such as the USFS , CalFIRE, the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC), and the California Energy Commission) to help craft policies and programs to assist forest biomass infrastructure.

What was accomplished:

- SNC and CalFIRE co-sponsored three workshops involving diverse stakeholders to develop a white paper defining the byproduct of sustainable forest management, as directed in SB 1122 (Stats. 2012, Chpt. 612). This white paper outlines a process to define sustainable forest management, and outlines a verification and monitoring process to ensure the majority of forest feedstock used in bioenergy facilities is a by-product of sustainable forest management. This paper has been submitted to CPUC.

Action Planned: Continue to provide outreach to help educate policy makers and the public on the issues associated with woody biomass utilization.

What was accomplished:

- SNC Staff have made presentations at conferences, workshops, and during field tours to help diverse interests better understand the importance of local woody biomass utilization to help reduce open biomass pile burning and the associated air pollution, as well as the local economic development opportunities of developing value added biomass products and bioenergy.

Action Planned: Help to compile information and tools to help diverse interests resolve issues and concerns.

What was accomplished:

- SNC Staff led a seven (7) month process to negotiate an agreement on the North Fork bioenergy project among the project proponents, County Board of Supervisors and planning staff, and the Center for Biological Diversity (CBD). CBD appealed the project in July 2013 based on about seven (7) issues of concern. SNC, with support from partners and consultants, addressed each issue by providing further data, technical knowledge and developing trusting relationships. CBD chose to not pursue legal action and the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) document has been adopted and initial project permits have been issued.

Abandoned Mine Lands (AML)

The SNC had planned to complete the following actions under this initiative by June 2014:

Action Planned: Work with partners to develop projects that will meet the funding criteria in the 2013-14 grant round.

What was accomplished:

- SNC Staff and partners have developed five (5) projects that have been invited to submit full project proposals for a total potential award amount of \$722,000 by the close of the 2013-14 grant round. Two of the five (5) are site improvement projects that are developing CEQA documentation during the project development process. One Category I grant award in the amount of \$75,000 for the City of Jackson's Oro de Amador Abandoned Mine Lands (AML) Project will come to the Board for approval in June.

Action Planned: Continue to work with the California Natural Resources Agency, other State agencies and partners to determine how best to address due diligence issues associated with the potential for AML to exist on properties that may be acquired using State funds.

What was accomplished:

- After initiating the collective discussion of the need for a consistent due diligence process with the California Natural Resources Agency and other agencies that may be affected, the Department of Conservation took the lead on developing a mechanism for the identification of chemical or physical hazards from AML's on properties that may be acquired using public funds. SNC Staff have continued to monitor the status of the new tool.

Action Planned: Assessing existing programs working to address AML issues and seeking opportunities to leverage these efforts on behalf of the Sierra; investigating the potential for new collaborative efforts; and, encouraging inclusion of Tribal Ecological Knowledge and Traditional Resource and Environmental Management Systems.

What was accomplished:

- SNC Staff continued to participate in the California Abandoned Mine Lands Agency Group (CAMLAG). CAMLAG initially formed to provide a platform for AML information sharing among state and federal agencies dealing with safety and health threats, regulatory requirements, and individual remediation efforts. Over the past year, the discussion and actions of the group have shifted to include a more comprehensive and collaborative approach among agencies tackling the AML issue. A new Charter was approved by the group members and SNC Staff actively participated in assisting with a new cross-agency AML priority ranking system which will enhance agency cooperation and resource pooling for project remediation in the future. The priority ranking system is scheduled for completion by the end of 2014.
- SNC Staff continued to participate in the Delta Tributaries Mercury Council (DTMC) where participating groups are exploring new methods and efforts of remediation and introducing new scientific research on the impacts of mercury in the environment. Networking within the DTMC produced a grant opportunity within the 2013-14 AML focus area grant round.

Action Planned: Exploring the availability of federal, state, and private funding sources and considering SNC's capacity to provide assistance to local governments and others in securing funds.

What was accomplished:

- SNC Staff has become more aware of the types of funding resources that are available for AML remediation work. Although no outside funds were targeted and secured for a project under this action item during the term of the 2013-14 Action Plan, SNC Staff will continue to explore opportunities through various sources including CAMLAG.

Action Planned: Sponsor and/or partnering in AML symposia and other events.

What was accomplished:

- SNC sponsored an event conducted by The Sierra Fund: Mercury and Human Health – Informational Summit and Strategy Meeting. The summit brought together doctors, health officials, and medical practitioners in the Region to provide information about current research on mercury in fish and provide an opportunity to evaluate and have input on current outreach efforts to communities within the Region. The event was open to the public and held in Sacramento in order to provide legislators the opportunity to attend.

Action Planned: Build on the continuing efforts of The Sierra Fund to educate policy makers and the public about the importance of remediation work to the reliability and sustainability of the State's water supply.

What was accomplished:

- SNC partnered with The Sierra Fund to conduct a legislative tour focusing on AML issues in December 2013. Legislative Staff were introduced to the impacts of legacy AML at Rollins Reservoir where contaminated sediment from upstream AML have severely impacted reservoir capacity; Empire Mine State Park where an innovative system to remediate arsenic contamination in water and soils has been implemented; and Malakoff State Historic Park where The Sierra Fund with funding assistance through the SNC grant program is working to find a solution to mercury entering Humbug Creek from the old hydraulic pit.
- SNC Staff participated in the planning and provided testimony for a special hearing of the Assembly Committee on Natural Resources in March-- Mercury Contamination: Toxic Legacy of the Gold Rush. Multiple speakers from diverse perspectives, including Tribal, State and Federal agencies, academia, and non-profit organizations, presented information on mercury transport from AML into waterways and fish and the impact of eating mercury contaminated fish.

Regional Agriculture and Ranching

Action Planned: Increase agritourism on the Sierra Nevada Geotourism MapGuide (SNGT) website and companion materials as a way of marketing these opportunities on behalf of farmers and ranchers in the Region.

What was accomplished:

- Since the beginning of the fiscal year, 62 additional agritourism assets have been added to the Geotourism website. By the end of 2013-14, we will have all of the farmers markets on the Geotourism website as well as some additional farmstay opportunities, totalling 20-25 additional nominations. Work on this will continue into 2014-15 as we launch an even broader effort to better market agritourism in the Region as part of the Regional Tourism and Recreation Initiative.

Action Planned: Capitalize on opportunities to increase understanding and work towards building a consensus about grazing on public lands in the Sierra, including managing and participating in grant projects to foster a collaborative approach in Alpine and Tuolumne Counties and continuing to provide assistance to increase public participation in discussions regarding grazing on the Inyo National Forest.

What was accomplished:

- SNC Staff facilitated a meeting of the California Department of Parks and Recreation with the California Rangeland Conservation Coalition (CRCC) to discuss the potential for increasing grazing on state parks. The meeting resulted in the formation of a workgroup made up of representatives from State Parks and CRCC to explore possible locations.
- SNC Staff monitored the national forest plan update processes on the Sequoia, Sierra and Inyo forests to understand the implications for grazing on public land and for other national forests in the Sierra.
- Through the SNC's assistance, the following program of work was completed as part of a contract with Center for Collaborative Policy at California State University Sacramento:
 - Inyo National Forest (INF) organized and completed two facilitated field trips to the Kern Plateau for interested parties representing ranching/grazing, fishing, conservation and a water quality regulatory agency. These field trips allowed the parties to visit rested grazing allotments in order to make comparisons to allotments currently being grazed.
 - The INF held a public meeting with interested parties to share results from scientific studies conducted by agency hydrologists, biologists, and ecosystem managers. This public meeting allowed the INF to solicit input from parties on the results of the studies.
 - A report was delivered to INF that captured comments/sentiments from the field trips and public meeting that is being used by the INF as they begin developing their public scoping for a NEPA decision to be made in 2015 on the rested grazing allotments on the Kern Plateau. The report identified key issues to be addressed during the NEPA process.

Action Planned: Stay abreast of and support relevant research and monitoring activities, including projects to quantify the ecosystem services provided by preservation and stewardship of ranches and agricultural lands in the Sierra.

What was accomplished:

- SNC Staff participated in discussions with agricultural producers relative to quantification of ecosystem services and had specific discussions about ecosystem services benefits and programs with California Association of Resource Conservation Districts (RCD), California Cattlemen's Association, Sierra RCD and Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).

Action Planned: Coordinate with partner organizations and sponsoring efforts to educate members of the legislature, their staff, and other decision-makers regarding the importance of ranches and agricultural lands in the Region.

What was accomplished:

- SNC sponsored the California Rangeland Conservation Coalition Summit and participated in the development of the agenda for the Summit as part of the Coalition Steering Committee.
- SNC sponsored the California Small Farm Conference and participated in sessions devoted to Sierra-based agriculture.

Action Planned: Publish a system indicators report on agricultural lands in the Sierra Nevada.

What was accomplished:

- The System Indicators report on Agricultural Lands and Ranches was approved by the Board in December 2013.

Regional Tourism and Recreation

Action Planned: Solicit and develop new content and destinations for display on the SNGT website.

What was accomplished:

- Staff assisted local contributors in the Region to develop 116 new nominations on the website between July and March. Of these, 62 are agritourism related. The addition of nominations will continue through the end of the fiscal year.

Action Planned: Distribute 60,000 printed MapGuides (second printing).

What was accomplished:

- Almost all of the 60,000 additional print maps have been distributed throughout the Region and beyond. Maps were distributed to California Welcome Centers, travel bureaus, corporate locations in metropolitan centers, visitor centers throughout the Region, and through direct mailings as fulfillment to responses from advertising placements.

Action Planned: Implement a marketing plan aimed at increasing downloads of mobile phone applications (app) and the amount of web traffic visiting the SNGT site on a monthly basis.

What was accomplished:

- An aggressive marketing strategy was implemented resulting in print advertising in the following publications: Sunset, Via, Sierra Heritage Magazine, Adventure Sports Journal, Yosemite Journal, 2014 California Travel Planner, and National Geographic Traveler magazine.
- There were a total of 287,787 visits to the Sierra Nevada Geotourism MapGuide website between July and March, representing a projected increase of 34% for the fiscal year.
- Between July and March, total Sierra Nevada Geotourism MapGuide mobile app downloads have increased by 1,940 to a total amount of 6,421.
- The Sierra Nevada Geotourism MapGuide Project was recognized with the

2013 Excellence in Marketing Award by the California Park and Recreation Society.

Action Planned: Assist in the development of a water trail in the Lower Owens River as a step toward a potential Region-wide water trail; developing criteria to evaluate and prioritize similar potential future projects as well as defining the types of support the SNC could provide.

What was accomplished:

- SNC Staff coordinated meetings with local stakeholders and Inyo County Supervisors to discuss strategies for implementing portions of the Lower Owens River (LORP) Recreation Use Plan. SNC Staff helped identify future funding sources for implementation, resulting in Inyo County authorizing funds for a programmatic CEQA process for the LORP Recreation Use Plan in order to have the plan adopted in the near future.
- SNC Staff is building support for the Lower Owens River Project with potential partners and presented the concept for the water trail at the State Trails and Greenways conference with representatives from California Department of Boating and Waterways.
- Staff completed a GIS analysis of all navigable waterbodies in the Sierra Nevada to identify a potential locations where future water trail projects may be initiated with assistance from SNC.

Action Planned: Initiate dialogue with partners to “frame the opportunity” and assess interest in developing a regional brand.

What was accomplished:

- Staff further developed the concept of “Regional branding” to be achieved through supporting and developing Region-wide user experiences unique to the Sierra Nevada. Examples include the establishment of a Sierra Water Trails network, and Sierra Nevada agritourism opportunities, which will be the focus of our efforts in 2014-15.

Action Planned: Convene and formalize a Regional partner working group

What was accomplished:

- The Sierra Nevada Geocouncil was re-established and new members were added to the group. The Geocouncil is comprised of volunteers from across the Region and represents a broad range of interests. It focuses on issues specific to the Sierra Nevada Geotourism MapGuide Project, but may be valuable in discussing regional issues related to recreation and tourism in the future. Additionally, SNC Staff has held informal meetings with representatives from a few key Destination Marketing Organizations in the Region to discuss ideas around a Regional working group.

Ecosystem Services

Action Planned: Lead the completion of the Mokelumne Watershed Avoided Cost Analysis, which analyzes how upper watershed restoration treatments, primarily fuel

hazard reduction and forest health management could benefit upstream and downstream beneficiaries by largely reducing costs by preventing fires and the associated costs.

What was accomplished:

- The nearly 300 page analysis was completed in April 2014 with a diverse group of stakeholders. The key findings are that forest health and fire prevention treatments save a minimum of 2 – 3 times the cost of wildfire, reduce the intensity and acreage of wildfire and provide an opportunity for jobs creation in rural communities. The analysis findings and story was carried in multiple media outlets including Sacramento and San Francisco Public Radio, over a dozen newspapers and e-newsletters across California and the nation (Wall Street Journal, Reno Gazette).

Action Planned: Work with project partners to evaluate new opportunities to implement actions based on the outcomes of the Mokelumne Avoided Cost Analysis.

What was accomplished:

- SNC and its partners are using the findings of the analysis to strengthen arguments for watershed investment in the water bond and cap and trade discussions.

Action Planned: Collaborate on the Demand Analysis effort to identify and reach out to corporations that are high water volume users in the East Bay Municipal Utilities District (EBMUD) service area. Purpose is to help these downstream beneficiaries understand the importance of secure supply and high water quality for their bottom line and discuss opportunities for them to invest resources in headwaters protection and restoration.

What was accomplished:

- The analysis showed the need to identify new investors, both public and private, to provide the funding needed to transition the forest conditions to a more resilient and healthy state. Staff has met with East Bay Municipal Utility District Board members to begin to explore potential opportunities with their rate payers. In addition, with the support of the National Forest Foundation, the Mokelumne Fund has been established to attract donations for upper watershed restoration work.

Action Planned: Partner on the Mokelumne Environmental Benefits Program to develop the protocol and tools to support an investment framework for potential funders to support restoration efforts throughout the Mokelumne Watershed.

What was accomplished:

- SNC Staff participated on a working group and supported the project with in-kind and cash match over the past two years. The protocols and tools are best applied to the lower watershed ecosystem and therefore staff will no longer engage in this project.

Action Planned: Evaluate the initial findings and future potential of two previously funded projects to quantify any potential water yield increase and change to the

hydrograph that may result from forest and meadow restoration activities: 1) the Sagehen water yield study and 2) the meadow hydrology assessment by the University of Nevada, Reno.

What was accomplished:

- (1) Despite the best efforts by SNC Staff, SNC was not able to fund the Sagehen water yield study; however staff arranged for The Nature Conservancy to fund the project. Work is underway, with results expected in the coming years.
- (2) The drought conditions during the initial meadow hydrology assessment study period hampered a clear analysis of how the observed meadows may or may not alter hydrology. However, the research will extend for one more year to gather more data. This will be funded with existing SNC funds and with a grant from the Environmental Protection Agency.

Education and Communications

Action Planned: Elevate the profile of the SNC as an accepted, trusted resource for information regarding the link between upper watersheds, forest health, climate change, clean water, clean air, and sustainable communities.

What was accomplished:

- Staff reviewed and worked with partners to provide comments on the Assembly Water Bond Working Group “Principles for Developing a Water Bond” (Principles) encouraging them to consider modifications to ensure that upper watershed work were included. Worked with partners such as The Nature Conservancy, Trust for Public Land, and Sierra Business Council to provide comments to the Senate Natural Resources Committee and the Senate Environmental Committee to emphasize the value of the Sierra Nevada Region to the State and to support direct allocation of investment in the Region through the SNC.
- Participated in Office of Planning and Research meetings to develop the draft California Water Action Plan then reviewed and worked with partners to provide feedback resulting in the inclusion of activities for better management of Sierra headwaters in the plan.

Action Planned: Continue relationship-building activities and conducting regular meetings with local/state/federal agencies, legislators and other decision-makers to establish the SNC’s role in protecting and enhancing the Region where more than 60 percent of the State’s developed water supply originates.

What was accomplished:

- Staff utilized SNC’s “Investing in California’s Watershed: Sierra Nevada Conservancy’s Proposition 84 Grant Program” report which highlights the success and value of the SNC grant program as an opportunity to conduct outreach to Legislators and Boards of Supervisors in all 22 counties of the Region.
- SNC conducted 37 meetings with State legislators and legislative staff.
- SNC co-hosted a Rim Fire Legislative Briefing with The Nature

Conservancy designed to educate decision-makers about the long-term impacts events like the Rim Fire can have on California's water, habitat, carbon storage, air quality and communities, as well as to help legislative staff understand the actions and specific investments necessary to reduce the risks of fire and its impacts in the future.

- SNC and the Sacramento–San Joaquin Delta Conservancy took historic action in March 2014, signing a joint resolution recognizing the shared challenges facing the two regions, the interconnection between the Sierra and the Delta, and agreeing to work collaboratively to address policies that impact both regions.

Action Planned: Partner with allies to complete Regional tours that demonstrate the value of SNC Initiatives and investment in watershed and forest health projects.

What was accomplished:

- SNC coordinated four tours with partners including Assembly Member Brian Dahle, the Amador Calaveras Consensus Group, USFS, EBMUD, Sierra Foothills Conservancy, and Tuolumne River Trust to bring legislators, researchers and scientists in to the Region for discussions about drought, water supply, water quality, the impact of fire and the need for investment.

Action Planned: Explore opportunities and coordinate efforts to retain regional funding in the 2014 water bond, regional investment from Cap-and-Trade Auction Revenue, and researching opportunities for other funding mechanisms to benefit the Region.

What was accomplished:

- Staff has worked with partners to provide input on a number of water bond proposals to ensure that the Sierra Nevada Region receive a reasonable allocation. Recent amendments to one water bond bills included strong language and funding to upper watersheds. Staff reviewed and provided comments to the California Air Resources Board (ARB) on the Draft Cap-and-Trade Auction Proceeds Investment Plan encouraging ARB to make substantial investment in the forest sector to achieve Greenhouse Gas emission reductions goals.
- The SNC worked with the USFS and CalFIRE to develop a proposal for the expenditure of Cap-and-Trade Auction Revenue. While our efforts to secure funding for the SNC were unsuccessful, the Governor's proposed budget did include a \$50 million allocation for the forest sector.
- SNC is assisting Sierra Business Council in its efforts to organize a broad based Sierra Coalition which will work to ensure that the Sierra Nevada is included in policy and funding discussions about a water bond, Cap-and-Trade investment planning and other longer-term financing mechanisms by positioning "Sierra needs" – such as watershed health ad forest management – as solutions to larger statewide problems and communicating that message with a unified voice to Sierra and urban legislators and other key decision makers.

Action Planned: Develop compelling messages, outreach materials, and appropriate distribution channels and making more effective use of communication vehicles including the SNC Web site, social media outlets, and other tools.

What was accomplished:

- By June 2014, staff will produce and publish a set of four educational interactive maps designed to educate urban legislators in the East Bay, San Francisco, Metropolitan Water District and Los Angeles about the source of their water and the issues and challenges that need to be addressed to ensure long-term water supply and quality.
- Staff developed a series of materials to support efforts to educate legislators and other decision-makers about the need for investment in the upper watersheds of our Region. Materials include a Rim fire Fact Sheet, the Water Fact Sheet, a Fire and California's Water Supply Map, a Bioenergy Fact Sheet and a Drought Fact Sheet.
- In response to seasonal issues such as fire and drought, the SNC has regularly updated our website to provide current information about Sierra Nevada fires, snowpack conditions, statewide reservoir conditions and links to other useful information to keep Sierra Nevada residents, legislators and key decision-makers informed.
- SNC was featured in the news 54 times in the last fiscal year. Articles highlighted SNC projects and initiative work as well as the disbursement of SNC funding throughout the Region. The SNC received our most significant and widespread coverage following the release of the Mokelumne Avoided Cost Analysis. Staff also facilitated the release of two special news features including an Op Ed authored by Jim Branham focused on forest management and an Op Ed submitted by Assembly Members Richard Gordon and Brian Dahle in which SNC was highlighted as an effective funding agency.
- The SNC became much more active in its use of social media in 2014. By dedicating staff to active use of Facebook, Instagram and Twitter accounts in the timeframe between January and April 2014, the SNC increased "likes" of our Facebook page nearly 40 percent and added 88 Twitter followers. Staff also began tracking popular social media postings with the goal of sharing additional information of a similar kind.

Action Planned: Create and distribute the Fiscal Year (FY) 2013-14 Annual Report.

What was accomplished:

- This Sierra Nevada Conservancy released the FY 2012-13 Annual Report in December, 2013.

Action Planned: Partner with Sierra-based Integrated Regional Water Management (IRWM) groups via the Sierra Water Work Group to stay abreast of developments in regional funding and to support them in competing more successfully for funding.

What was accomplished:

- SNC participated in the Sierra Water Work Group (SWWG) which actively supports sierra IRWM groups in a variety of ways.

- SNC sponsored a portion of the 2014 Sierra Summit organized by SWWG to bring regional IRWM groups together for three (3) days of education, discussion and information sessions on topics that may lead to regional favorable policy changes at a state level.

Action Planned: Complete activities related to the Mountain Counties Overlay Regional Report piece of the California Water Plan 2013 Update and staying abreast of developments for Water Plan Update 2018 and the Delta Plan.

What was accomplished:

- Coordinated Regional input and engagement in the Department of Water Resources Water Plan Update 2013 by acting as lead author for the Mountain Counties Overlay Report. The final draft Mountain Counties Overlay Regional Report portion of the California Water Plan Update 2013 was delivered to Department of Water Resources (DWR) in December, 2013. DWR is scheduled to release the full, final Water Plan Update in June, 2014.

Great Sierra River Cleanup (GSRC)

Action Planned: Continue to work with existing river cleanups throughout the Sierra to unite and expand them.

What was accomplished:

- The SNC supported 53 organizations that were also involved with GSRC in 2012.
- The SNC provided all-day cleanup coordinator training intended to make existing cleanups more effective, as well as give new coordinators the tools they need to get started.

Action Planned: Recruit organizations in areas with no river cleanup programs to host cleanups in their areas.

What was accomplished:

- The SNC was able to bring seven new cleanups under the umbrella of the GSRC and another cleanup returned to the GSRC after not participating in the prior year.

Pacific Forest and Watershed Lands Stewardship Council (Stewardship Council)

Action Planned: Execute agreements to accept covenants on lands donated to the US Forest Service.

What was accomplished:

- Conservation Covenant Documents were completed for one donation parcel: Deer Creek. Transfer of this parcel is awaiting confirmation from the California Public Utilities Commission. This Agreement will be the model for all of the following Conservation Covenants (currently estimated at up to

another 9 properties).

Action Planned: Finalize agreements for SNC to carry out certain duties upon the dissolution of the Stewardship Council, including selection of replacement conservation easement holders, and performing monitoring activities.

What was accomplished:

- One Conservation Covenant Services Funding Agreement has been completed for the Deer Creek Donated Parcel to USFS.
- The Third Party Roles Tasks Funding Agreement is in final draft and should be completed prior to June 30, 2014. This will be the model for any future funding agreements for additional tasks.
- SNC will be able to begin requesting reimbursement for tasks completed under these agreements in the new FY.

Action Planned: Establish a funding mechanism to compensate the SNC for tasks performed as described in Memorandum Of Understanding (MOU) and subsequent agreements.

What was accomplished:

- It was determined that the SNC would invoice the Stewardship Council for tasks completed under the MOU to be reimbursed under the funding agreements. An invoice format was developed and accepted by the State Controller for this purpose.

Mt. Whitney Fish Hatchery (MWFH)

Action Planned: Participate in a workgroup to develop a process for exploring potential uses, ownership, and management of the property.

What was accomplished:

There was very little progress made on this project this year, largely due to circumstances beyond the control of the SNC. However, staff did continue in the ongoing dialogue, including the following:

- SNC Staff held meetings with Inyo County representatives to discuss potential future uses being considered for MWFH and possible ownership partners along with identifying additional funding sources to assist with future management and maintenance of the hatchery.
- SNC Staff communicated with California Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW) regarding the need for completing a Phase 2 environmental site assessment, as recommended by the initial Phase 1 study completed for the site appraisal. The Phase 1 report identified areas of concern on the site. The Phase 2 study would include more testing of the identified sites in order to determine if there were specific environmental issues to be addressed prior to a transfer of ownership. DFW continues to consider whether or not to conduct a Phase 2, placing the overall project in a holding mode.

Action Planned: Participate in development a master plan for the property to guide decision-making.

What was accomplished:

- Once again, little progress was made on this item. The SNC continued to coordinate and facilitate discussions and planning with the DFW, Inyo County, the Friends of the Mt. Whitney Fish Hatchery and other stakeholders to develop a long term master plan for the Mt. Whitney Fish Hatchery and surrounding property. Inyo County has identified initial ideas for long-term use and management of the facility, but has paused any further development until a decision is reached by DFW about the Phase 2 assessment.

Action Planned: Identify additional stakeholders to engage in the process.

What was accomplished:

- A list of potential stakeholders has been created through input from Inyo County and Friends of Mt. Whitney Fish Hatchery.

Action Planned: Effectuate the transfer of property, if deemed necessary and appropriate, from DFW to the SNC and the SNC to another appropriate entity.

What was accomplished:

- No action was taken on this item, given the delays described in earlier items. It remains unclear as to whether the circumstance will exist where SNC ownership is necessary and appropriate.

Action Planned: Determine what, if any, role is appropriate for the SNC in the ultimate disposition of the property and ongoing management.

What was accomplished:

- Progress on this item is dependent on the various issues described above, therefore little has been this year.

Sierra Nevada System Indicators

Action Planned: Publish, following Board approval, the last two in the series of six (6) reports that present the data and analysis associated with nineteen Sierra Nevada System Indicators.

What was accomplished:

- The last two System Indicators reports were completed and presented to the Board in 2013; the report on Fire Threat was approved by the Board in September 2013 and the report on Agricultural Lands and Ranches was approved by the Board in December 2013. All six (6) Indicators reports are published to the SNC Web site for public access and use.

Action Planned: Coordinate System Indicator data and analysis with other internal reports and program efforts to help ensure accurate and consistent assessment of the Region's conditions.

What was accomplished:

- All of the supporting data, tables, charts, and maps have been organized into an internal database which can be utilized by SNC Staff.
- Utilizing SNC data to inform and support other SNC reports and outreach efforts is an ongoing function of the program. Internal training was conducted to ensure staff is aware of the resource and its contents.

Action Planned: Increase website presence of System Indicators and supporting data, with outreach efforts to identify agencies, stakeholders, and other partners who might utilize and benefit from the reports.

What was accomplished:

- The System Indicators reports were relocated to a more visible position on the SNC Web site for better public access and presentation of the information was reorganized for easier use. It was decided that putting the massive supporting datasets on the Web site for direct public use would be impractical and problematic, and would not serve public use well. Rather, the public is encouraged to contact SNC to provide needed clarifications or to request more detailed data analysis (such as providing county-level analysis where only Subregion-level analysis was provided in the Indicator reports).
- SNC participated in an advisory meeting with the Governor's Office of Planning and Research (OPR) in their development of a set of Statewide Indicators. Our System Indicators reports were provided to OPR as a resource in this effort. SNC is also aiding the Delta Conservancy in their effort to develop a set of environmental indicators. Additional strategic outreach to other state and federal agencies will be ongoing.

Action Planned: Develop specific strategies and timing for future periodic updating of indicator data to enable assessment of changes over time within the SNC Region.

What was accomplished:

- Only some initial steps have proceeded so far on a framework for updating the Indicator data for a second generation of reports. The earliest any updates would occur would be in 2015.

Internal Operations

The SNC had planned to complete the following actions under this initiative by June 2014:

Action Planned: Identify and provide additional training opportunities to ensure staff continue to hone skills and are prepared to effectively implement the SNC mission.

What was accomplished:

- In September we released a Training Procedure to assist staff in identifying and signing up for training. We have received positive feedback from staff on the training process and have had an increase in training attendance.
- Two All-Staff Trainings were completed in this fiscal year which included Project Management Training and Change Management Training. Both of these trainings will help staff carry out projects more efficiently and

effectively.

Action Planned: Implement SNC's safety program, including the development of a department-wide safety committee.

What was accomplished:

- The Safety Committee was established and met to discuss potential safety issues. Safety inspections were performed on each cubicle and space within SNC offices and any needed corrections were made.
- SNC's Injury and Illness Prevention Program (IIPP) Manual was created and distributed to staff.

Action Planned: Implement SNC's Equal Employment Opportunity Program, including the development of a department-wide Disability Advisory Committee (DAC).

What was accomplished:

- In coordination with the California Tahoe Conservancy and the State Coastal Conservancy we established a DAC Committee. The DAC identified some facility corrections that could make access for disabled visitors and staff easier. We are researching the feasibility of these recommendations and will continue to work on this next fiscal year.

Action Planned: Improve SNC network and information technology tools and services including continuous hardware assessment and modifications, continuation of web content management (Plone) training, tracking and reporting on service call frequency and trends, and upgrading SharePoint including development and implementation of a migration plan.

What was accomplished:

- The SNC deployed a Microsoft SharePoint 2013 extranet to facilitate collaboration with external partners through document sharing, discussion boards and project timelines in a secure environment.
- Mariposa IT services were transferred to the new facility and a new T1 line (internet access) was installed. This change slightly increased the bandwidth for the Mariposa office. We will continue to look at solutions to improve their internet speed next fiscal year.
- Staff created a Web site content management procedure and training materials. This allows subject matter experts to make Web site updates and revisions themselves. Not having to rely on the IT unit allows for more timely updates to our Web site.
- The SNC upgraded mobile devices. All SNC mobile devices are now smartphones giving staff access to mobile hot spots, work email, and SNC's social media platforms.
- The SNC made changes to our server environment, which provide greater redundancy and the ability to recover from server disruptions more quickly. These changes ensure SNC is following current industry standards.

Action Planned: Improve the SNC Web site navigability, regularly refreshing content and ensuring that content reflects organizational priorities and Region-wide

accomplishments.

What was accomplished:

- Updates have been occurring regularly based on external needs/triggers, funding opportunities, fire impacts, etc. The Web site content management software allows program staff, with proper training, to make many Web site updates immediately.

Action Planned: Improve emergency preparedness and safety through regular staff training and the implementation of table-top exercises and drills. Complete and distribute SNC's Facility Emergency Evacuation Plan for each SNC facility.

What was accomplished:

- Emergency Evacuation Plans were completed and distributed for each SNC office.
- The emergency evacuation team and all staff were trained on proper evacuation procedures. The SNC Auburn Office, in coordination with the building complex, performed a mock fire drill. Fire drills will occur semiannually.
- An Automated External Defibrillator was purchased for the Auburn Office and staff was trained on how to use it in May.

Background

As discussed under Agenda Item IX, the Board adopted a new Strategic Plan in September 2011, which establishes objectives for the Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) and lays out the strategies the organization will employ in meeting those objectives. Each year the Board approves an annual Action Plan that outlines the specific activities the SNC will undertake during the upcoming fiscal year in support of the strategies included in the Plan. Under Agenda Item X, staff reported progress on completing the actions included in the 2013-14 Action Plan.

Current Status

Staff has completed the development of the Draft 2014-15 Action Plan ([Attachment A](#)). The primary challenge faced in developing the draft Action Plan continues to be developing a realistic scope in terms of what we can accomplish over the next twelve months. The breadth of the SNC's mission, the varied needs of the Region, and the enthusiasm of stakeholders and staff in terms of all the ways the SNC can contribute to meeting those needs, continues to require some discipline on the part of staff in setting forth a set of activities we can reasonably accomplish. In addition, this draft Action Plan once again emphasizes the importance of working with partners to accomplish all of the objectives that are so important to the Sierra Nevada.

The Draft 2014-15 Action Plan includes the same overarching projects and initiatives as were included in the 2013-14 Action Plan with one exception: the Sierra Nevada System Indicators Project. It does not appear in the new Action Plan, because the project phase of this effort has been completed. Updating and using the System Indicators will now become an ongoing activity for the SNC.

New actions have been identified under the projects and initiatives in the Draft Plan, as well as the continuation of some actions from the 2013-14 Action Plan, either because the actions were begun, but have not yet been completed, or because the actions are more ongoing in nature.

Resource Needs

Staff has developed a high level workload and resource analysis related to the twelve projects and initiatives included in the Draft Action Plan (see [Table 1](#) on following page). The analysis is based on our best estimates of the needs of each project or initiative given the current scope and may change as more detailed project plans are developed. Nevertheless, it serves a valuable purpose in helping us to perform a "reality check" on the level of activity we've outlined in the Draft Action Plan and also helps us to develop initial staffing and budget plans for the coming year.

In looking at external resource needs for each project, it's especially important to note that what's listed in the table reflects only potential allocations to these projects. These figures are currently based on internal budget requests that have been submitted by each project and initiative lead, but these requests have not gone through the full internal budget decision process, which will continue into next year.

These estimates only include resources that would be allocated directly to a project or initiative and do not include baseline activities that support all projects such as contracting, information technology, etc. They also do not include time spent by the Executive Office to provide oversight on the projects or fund development activities undertaken on behalf of the projects, e.g., staff time that may be spent identifying and seeking additional, outside funding to support project activities. Finally, the estimates of potential external resources do not include external resources that will be used to support a project in 2014-15 that were acquired through a multi-year contract funded in a prior year.

Table 1
Estimates of Staffing and Resource Needs by Project/Initiative
Fiscal Year 2014-15

Project/Initiative	Estimated Staff Resources*	Estimated Potential External Resources
Grant Program	3.0 - 3.5	--
SNFCI	1.8 - 4.0	\$70,000
Biomass Utilization	1.9 - 3.0	--
Abandoned Mine Lands	0.7 - 1.0	\$50,000
Regional Agriculture and Ranching	1.4 - 1.7	\$10,000
Regional Tourism and Recreation	2.2 - 2.5	\$50,000
Ecosystem Services	0.3 - 0.4	\$40,000
Education and Communication	6.5	\$40,600 - \$49,000
Great Sierra River Cleanup	1.2 - 2.7	\$20,500 - \$23,500
Stewardship Council	0.2	--
Mount Whitney Fish Hatchery	0.1	--
Internal Operations	1.8	--
Totals	20.5 - 26.1	\$276,100 - \$287,500
* Reported in personnel years (PYs); may not add to total, due to rounding		

Next Steps

Working with partners, staff will move forward in implementing the 2014-15 Action Plan once approved by the Board. Staff will update the Board at future Board meetings on the progress of, or significant changes in, the projects included in the Action Plan.

Recommendation

Staff recommends the Board approve the proposed Sierra Nevada Conservancy 2014-15 Action Plan after reviewing and providing any modifications and/or comments.

Agenda Item XI
2014-15 Proposed Action Plan
Attachment A

2014-15

Draft Action Plan



SIERRA NEVADA
CONSERVANCY

Draft Report Presented at
June 2014 Board Meeting

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The following represent the major initiatives and activities to be undertaken by the Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) between July 2014 and June 2015, consistent with the SNC's Strategic Plan (Plan). Upon approval by the SNC Governing Board, staff will use this Plan to guide activities in the coming year. In the event that circumstances lead to other initiatives or activities being undertaken, staff will provide the Board with updated information at a subsequent Board meeting.

Grant Program

The SNC Grant Program will complete the following actions through June 2015:

- Awarding all of the funds currently available under the 2013-14 grant round, which is focused on Healthy Forest, Biomass Utilization and Abandoned Mine Land Projects.
- Implementing the Rim Fire Restoration grant focus area, funding \$1 million of high quality projects in the effected Region.
- Closing out 34 current grant projects (allocating returned funds to the 2013-14 grant round); completing all required reporting including SNC's Success Tracker and Performance Measures Database as well as State documentation.
- Providing timely and accurate response to any bond reporting and audit requests received. Updating the Agency Bond Consolidated Reporting System web site and the California Strategic Growth Plan Bond Accountability web site as required in Executive Order S-02-07.
- In the event that new grant funding is identified for the SNC, initiate the process to develop guidelines necessary to implement future grant funding cycles.

Sierra Nevada Forest and Community Initiative (SNFCI)

The SNC will continue to coordinate implementation of the SNFCI, working closely with a wide range of stakeholders and agencies. Specific actions to be accomplished under SNFCI have been organized into three tiers in terms of priority levels, 1 indicating highest priority and 3 indicating lowest priority. They include:

- Providing Proposition 84 grant funding for projects which meet SNC criteria for Healthy Forests funding under the 2013-14 grant round and Rim Fire Restoration grant focus. (Tier 1)
- Continuing to work with the SNFCI Regional Coordinating Council and the US Forest Service in specific focus areas most likely to reduce barriers to increase pace and scale of ecological restoration in our forests. (Tier 1)
- Continuing to develop and support projects consistent with SNFCI objectives, with clear deliverables and quantifiable measures for success and a positive influence on increasing pace and scale of restoration. (Tier 2)
- Supporting forest and biomass collaboration efforts seeking long-term sustainability by assisting them in the search for capacity building funding through SNC partners and other opportunities. (Tier 2)
- Participating in various efforts to promote research, policy changes and investment in support of SNFCI objectives. (Tier 2)
- Monitoring various projects and efforts underway which may intersect with SNFCI, either through policy changes that may impact the initiative, or emerging needs

which might be strong candidates for SNC support or technical assistance, as resources allow. (Tier 3)

Biomass Utilization

The SNC will continue to work with a broad range of community, agency, and industry stakeholders to find economic uses for the excess biomass removed in forest restoration activities. SNC is identified in the California 2012 Bioenergy Action Plan as the state agency responsible for pursuing funding for forest Bioenergy research and implementation and assisting communities with the development of community scale projects. To fulfill these goals and responsibilities SNC will take the following actions:

- Providing Proposition 84 grant funding for projects which meet SNC criteria for Biomass Utilization funding under the 2013-14 grant round.
- Continuing to provide technical assistance and funding support, as well as identify additional funding sources, for projects in various stages of development within the Region. Under the Bioenergy Action Plan, the SNC will provide a limited level of assistance to projects outside the Region.
- Continuing to work with other agencies (such as the US Forest Service, CalFIRE, the California Public Utilities Commission, and the California Energy Commission) to help craft policies and programs to assist forest biomass infrastructure development and retention.
- Continuing to provide outreach to help educate policy makers and the public on the issues associated with woody biomass utilization to help diverse interests resolve issues and concerns.
- Helping to compile information and develop tools that assist in identifying the most appropriate locations for biomass utilization facilities.
- In the event that Cap and Trade Auction Revenue becomes available for biomass utilization purposes, assist in development and implementation of a funding program to promote biomass utilization infrastructure and encourage utilization.

Abandoned Mine Lands

The SNC, working with multiple government and non-government partners, will continue to assist in the identification and implementation of approaches for Abandoned Mine Lands (AML) remediation that may be widely applied to improve the quality and reliability of the water and waterways and water storage facilities within and outside the Region. Specific actions will include:

- Continuing to identify and develop AML project proposals eligible for funding in the 2013-14 grant round until the funding allocations are fully spent.
- Continuing to pursue the goal of a blanket due diligence process for properties that may be acquired using State funds.
- Facilitating increased collaboration among State agencies participating in AML remediation in the Sierra and other parts of the State by providing support to the California Abandoned Mine Lands Agency Group (CAMLAG) and helping to identify and fill gaps in research, data, and knowledge that could be addressed in order to facilitate a more collaborative approach.

- Continuing to work with partners to educate decision makers and others about legacy mining impacts; Sponsoring and/or partnering in AML symposia and other events.
- Continuing to explore various funding opportunities for AML cleanup.

Regional Agriculture and Ranching

The SNC will continue to participate and support partners' efforts and learn more about the needs of farmers and ranchers in the Sierra and how the SNC can help to address those needs. In addition, the SNC will continue to identify opportunities to increase the presence of the SNC and Sierra stakeholders in policy and funding discussions. Specific actions will include:

- Working closely with the Recreation and Tourism Initiative, support efforts to develop a Sierra Agritourism Network and increase the presence of agritourism on the Sierra Nevada Geotourism MapGuide website and companion materials.
- Continuing to participate in discussions, workshops and meetings to understand relevant issues, policies and actions and build relationships within the farming and ranching communities.
- Supporting partner efforts to engage and reach out to policy makers and legislators regarding the benefits of agriculture and ranching and include these messages in SNC outreach and communication efforts as appropriate.
- Gaining a better understanding of policy and feasibility regarding agriculture biomass utilization.
- Working with partners to support their efforts, including potentially funding and implementing workshops addressing specific needs; utilize grant writer to find funds to support these efforts.
- Supporting and participating in on-going conversations regarding grazing on public lands.

Regional Tourism and Recreation

The SNC will focus on four primary elements to make substantial progress in promoting and developing regional tourism and recreation, including: 1) continuing support and growth of the Sierra Nevada Geotourism (SNGT) MapGuide Project, 2) assisting in the development of tourism and recreation attractions with regional significance, 3) promoting the development of programs and opportunities that strengthen the Sierra Nevada "brand", and 4) building and maintaining recreation and tourism industry relationships. Specific actions will include:

- Soliciting and developing new content and destinations for display on the SNGT website, with an emphasis on agritourism, and under-represented regions.
- Implementing the first of a two-year distribution plan for half of 71,000 printed MapGuides (third printing).
- Implementing a marketing plan aimed at increasing downloads of mobile phone applications and the amount of web traffic visiting the SNGT site on a monthly basis.
- Assisting in the development of up to three water trail projects with local organizations and assisting in the formation of a regional association to support local organizations interested in developing additional water trails.

- Working with state and local partners promoting existing agritourism opportunities, and supporting efforts to establish new agritourism opportunities by linking agritourism projects in the Region to create and market a region wide network of agritourism products and experiences.
- Engaging with industry professionals and organizations to increase exposure of the Region and tourism issues in the Region.

Ecosystem Services

The SNC will work with partners to continue actions under this initiative which help to quantify environmental benefits in the upper watershed and initiate new investment strategies and identify new investors. The primary actions will be:

- Continuing to communicate the key findings of the Mokelumne Watershed Avoided Cost Analysis (MACA), to make the case that new and additional investment in fuel treatments is a cost savings measure and needed for long-term forest health.
- Working with project partners to evaluate new opportunities to implement actions based on the outcomes of the MACA.
- Collaborating with the National Forest Foundation and other partners to entice individuals and organizations, particularly in the East Bay, to invest in the Mokelumne Watershed Fund.
- Coordinating with key partners including US Forest Service, The Nature Conservancy and University of California Merced to identify and implement research and monitoring projects to better understand the relationship between forest management and water yield.
- Evaluating the initial findings and future potential of a previously funded project to quantify any potential water yield increase and change to the hydrograph that may result from meadow restoration activities. Work with US Geological Survey (USGS) and other partners to better understand the connection of forests, fires, and sediment on existing reservoirs within the state. Evaluate potential problem areas and begin to quantify the extent of the problem, if any.

Education and Communications

The SNC will continue to educate policy and decision-makers regarding the importance of the Sierra and the SNC to the state's long-term health and well-being. Outreach will focus on increasing awareness of the Sierra Nevada Region's important role in ensuring water quality and supply. The overall goals of the Education and Communications program are to encourage key target audiences to support appropriate Sierra investment and sound policy that protects Sierra resources for the benefit of the entire State; establish secure funding for project work in the Region; and support the SNC as a critical funding delivery mechanism for the Region and the State. Actions will include:

- Elevating the profile of the SNC as an accepted, trusted resource for information regarding the link between upper watersheds, forest health, climate change, clean water, clean air, and sustainable communities through increased involvement and communications on such issues.
- Continuing relationship-building activities and conducting regular meetings with local/state/federal agencies, legislators and other decision-makers to ensure

investment in the Region where more than 60 percent of the State's developed water supply originates.

- Utilizing events, newsletters, media stories, press releases, social media postings, the SNC Web site, interactive/story maps and other related activities to communicate the value of the Sierra Nevada Region to the rest of the State.
- Tracking and analyzing current Sierra Nevada scientific research to inform the development of sound science-based policy that protects and restores the Sierra Nevada Region.
- Partnering with allies to complete Regional tours that demonstrate the value of SNC Initiatives and the importance of investment in watershed and forest health projects.
- Creating and distributing the fiscal year 2013-14 Annual Report.

Great Sierra River Cleanup

The SNC will coordinate the 6th Annual Great Sierra River Cleanup on September 20, 2014. In 2013, more than 4,200 volunteers joined together to remove nearly 39 tons of trash and recyclables from rivers throughout the Sierra Nevada. Specific actions will include:

- Continuing to work with existing river cleanups throughout the Sierra to unite and expand them.
- Recruiting organizations in areas with no river cleanup programs to host cleanups in their areas.

Pacific Forest and Watershed Lands Stewardship Council

The SNC will continue to work with the Stewardship Council to implement a number of activities identified in the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the two organizations. In 2014-15, the SNC anticipates completing the following actions:

- Executing agreements to serve as covenant holder on lands donated to the US Forest Service (up to 10 properties).
- Finalizing agreements for SNC to carry out certain duties upon the dissolution of the Stewardship Council.
- Initiating the funding mechanism to compensate the SNC for all tasks performed.
- Building a web-based document library for PG&E lands that have been donated and approved through the California Public Utilities Commission.

Mt. Whitney Fish Hatchery

The SNC will continue to facilitate and participate in a discussion with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW), Inyo County, Friends of Mt. Whitney Fish Hatchery, and the Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) in order to determine under what conditions the Mt. Whitney Fish Hatchery (MWFH) can be transferred to a third party. Actions to be undertaken in 2014-15 include:

- Pursue a decision by DFW and WCB about completing a Phase 2 environmental site assessment report. The Phase 2 report will provide information on the environmental condition of the facility – results may have an impact on the completion of a transfer if significant environmental issues are identified.

- Pursue a decision by DFW and WCB about completing the future-use document, which would limit the types of uses that could occur on the property if it were transferred to a third party.
- A decision by SNC whether to proceed with a potential transfer based on 1) the results of a Phase 2 report, 2) a finalized future use document and, 3) a credible plan in place for completing a potential transfer that has been agreed to by participating parties.
- Confirmation by Inyo County of a third party in place for a potential transfer and a plan completed for future use.

Internal Operations

The SNC will improve its internal operations in a number of areas, including taking the following actions:

- Developing new processes and evaluation tools to ensure SNC's training program is preparing staff to implement the SNC mission.
- Ensuring continuity of essential functions and operations following a catastrophic event by implementing SNC's Business Continuity Plan. Providing training for management as well as performing table-top exercises and drills to test SNC's technology recovery plan.
- Improving SNC network and information technology tools and services including continuous hardware assessment and modifications. Upgrading to SharePoint 2013 including development and implementation of a migration plan. Analyzing telecommunication and video conferencing systems to enhance communication mechanisms ensuring collaboration, efficiency and productivity across the organization.
- Developing Project Management tools to ensure that the SNC's processes, systems and tools are efficient and effective. This will include training staff to use the tools developed internally, as well as training and support for SNC users of Microsoft Project.
- Converting our current accounting and budget systems over to the statewide FISCAL system to maximize efficiency and effectively manage our resources.
- Improving SNC's Geographic Information Systems (GIS) storage procedures ensuring that critical data can be accessed and recovered from any location.

Agenda Item XI

2014-15 Action Plan

Presented by:

Joan Keegan

Overview

- Plan annually to meet Strategic Plan goals;
- List of projects substantially similar to current Action Plan; and,
- Challenge to manage scope of projects within available resources.

Projects

- Grant Program
- SNFCI
- Biomass Utilization
- Abandoned Mine Lands (AML)
- Regional Agriculture and Ranching
- Regional Tourism and Recreation

Projects (cont.)

- Ecosystem Services
- Education and Communications
- Great Sierra River Cleanup
- Stewardship Council
- Mt. Whitney Fish Hatchery
- Internal Operations

Resource Estimates

Project/Initiative	Estimated Staff Resources	Estimated Potential External Resources
Grant Program	3.0 - 3.5	--
SNFCI	1.8 - 4.0	\$70,000
Biomass Utilization	1.9 – 3.0	--
Abandoned Mine Lands	0.7 – 1.0	\$50,000
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Regional Tourism and Recreation	2.2 - 2.5	\$50,000
Ecosystem Services	0.3 - 0.4	\$40,000
Education and Communication	6.5	\$40,600 - \$49,000
Great Sierra River Cleanup	1.2 - 2.7	\$20,500 - \$23,500
Stewardship Council	0.2	--
Mount Whitney Fish Hatchery	0.1	--
Internal Operations	1.8	--
Totals	20.5 - 26.1	\$276,100 - \$287,500

Next Steps

- Report on project progress to Board
- Bring new projects to Board for approval
- End-of-year report on accomplishments

Recommendation

Approve 2014-15 Action Plan after providing review and input



Background

The Board has been briefed on a number of times in the past relative to the Mokelumne Watershed Avoided Cost Analysis. Using the upper Mokelumne River Watershed as a representative case, the Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) joined a number of partners in an analysis to answer the following question: Does it make economic sense to increase investment in fuel treatments to reduce the risk of large, damaging wildfires? The analysis suggests that the economic benefits of landscape-scale fuel-reduction treatments far outweigh the costs of wildfire.

Although wildfire and the associated costs are increasing in the western United States, few studies have taken a hard look at the costs and benefits of fuel treatments to determine if an increased investment in treatments makes economic sense. Through a collaborative process with key stakeholders and using state-of-the-art models for fire, vegetation and post-fire erosion, the potential impacts of a landscape-scale fuel treatments program in the upper Mokelumne Watershed was analyzed. In addition, an evaluation of who would benefit the most from investing in fuel treatments and reducing the risk of high-intensity wildfires was conducted. These findings can help inform forest management not only in the Mokelumne Watershed, but also in similar watersheds throughout the Sierra Nevada and the western United States.

Current Status

The analysis focused on modeling wildfire in the Mokelumne Watershed both with and without implementation of the fuel-treatments scenario. The size and intensity of five potential representative fires based on fire history in the region, current forest conditions and state-of-the-art wildfire models were modeled. The fuel-treatments scenario to identify how active forest management would likely modify wildfire behavior and post-fire erosion over a 30-year time period was modeled. Using these results, the financial costs and benefits of the treatments, focusing on those elements to which a dollar value can readily be assigned such as homes, infrastructure, timber, biomass energy, carbon and employment was calculated.

The analysis was based on conservative assumptions regarding potential costs and benefits, not a worst-case wildfire scenario. For example, the nearby 2013 Rim Fire was significantly larger than all five modeled fires combined and burned at higher intensity. In addition, wildfire impacts with economic values that could not be readily determined, such as the effects of fire on wildlife habitat, recreation, tourism, and public health and cultural sites were not included. Thus, in multiple respects, the conclusions likely underestimate the costs associated with future wildfires and the benefits of active management, suggesting an even stronger case for action.

Avoided Cost Analysis Key Findings:

- **Fuel treatments can significantly reduce the size and intensity of wildfires.**
Proactive forest management can significantly modify fire behavior by reducing fire intensity, size and rate of spread. The results showed that the modeled fuel-treatments scenario reduced the size of each of the five fires by 30 to 76 percent, or a total reduction in size of approximately 41 percent. More importantly, the

modeled scenario reduced the acreage of high-intensity wildfire by approximately 75 percent.

- The economic benefits of fuel treatments may be three or more times the costs. In total, across the categories of benefits quantified in this report, the value of avoided costs significantly exceeds the cost of fuels management. The avoided losses in terms of both costs and lost income opportunities include the value of structures saved from wildfire and the costs of fire suppression and post-fire restoration, as well as potential revenue from carbon sequestration, merchantable timber and biomass that could be used for energy. For each cost category, an estimated range of values from low to high were estimated. Using the high estimates for benefits (\$231 million) results in a benefit-cost ratio for the fuel-treatments scenario of 3.4:1. Even when applying a more conservative approach, using the low estimate for benefits (\$126 million), the benefits of investing in fuel treatments are nearly twice the costs, with a benefit-cost ratio of approximately 1.9:1.
- There are many beneficiaries from increased fuel treatments, especially taxpayers. The economic benefits of fuel treatments accrue to a wide range of landowners, public and private entities, taxpayers and utility ratepayers. As shown in figure ES-4 (page xix of the [report](#)), the primary beneficiaries are the State of California, federal government, residential private property owners (and their insurers), timber owners, and water and electric utilities. By comparison, the costs of fuel treatments are largely borne by public land managers (and, by implication, taxpayers). An accelerated fuel-treatments program would also result in an estimated 35-45 jobs relating to fuel treatments and 7-10 biomass-to-energy jobs over a 10-year period. These figures represent a significant addition to the current number of such jobs in these rural areas.

In sum, the analysis shows that it makes economic sense to invest in forest management to reduce the risk of destructive, high-severity wildfires in the upper Mokelumne Watershed. Although achieving such benefits requires a significant increase in funding to achieve the appropriate pace and scale of fuel treatments, the long-term cost savings far exceed the costs of the initial investment. To the extent that the Mokelumne Watershed is representative of other fire-adapted forested watersheds of the Sierra Nevada and the western United States, this report makes the economic case for significantly increasing investment in fuel treatments in western forests. A brochure produced by SNC and project partners is included as [Attachment A](#).

SNC Staff teamed up with U.S. Forest Service and The Nature Conservancy (TNC) outreach and media staff to release a press release on the report's findings on April 10th. The release of the Mokelumne Avoided Cost Analysis was covered 25 times by print media - 11 Sierra outlets, a Coastal paper (the Salinas Californian) and a San Francisco East Bay paper (the Santa Cruz Sentinel). In addition, the report was referenced in the Wall Street Journal, in four (4) Central Valley papers, and seven (7) electronic newsletters. In addition, the study was featured in the May edition of the Forestry Source, a monthly publication produced by the Society of American Foresters.

Finally, Capital Public Radio will feature the analysis' findings as part of their summer wildfire series. There were also three (3) radio interviews and one (1) television interview. Capital Public Radio (Sacramento), KQED public radio (San Francisco Bay Area) and a radio and television interview with My Mother Lode, based in Sonora.

In addition to media outlets, staff has briefed the East Bay Municipal Utility District's (EBMUD's) Board members, U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Under Secretary level, USDA Forest Service Region 5 Forest Supervisor and Directors, Department of Interior (DOI), Bureau of Reclamation Under Secretary level, Center for Environmental Quality (CEQ), California Congressional, and US Senate staff, and Assembly Natural Resources staff. At the time this staff report was prepared, staff was attempting to schedule briefings with key State legislators and staff representing the San Francisco East Bay area, as well as the Sierra Nevada.

Next Steps

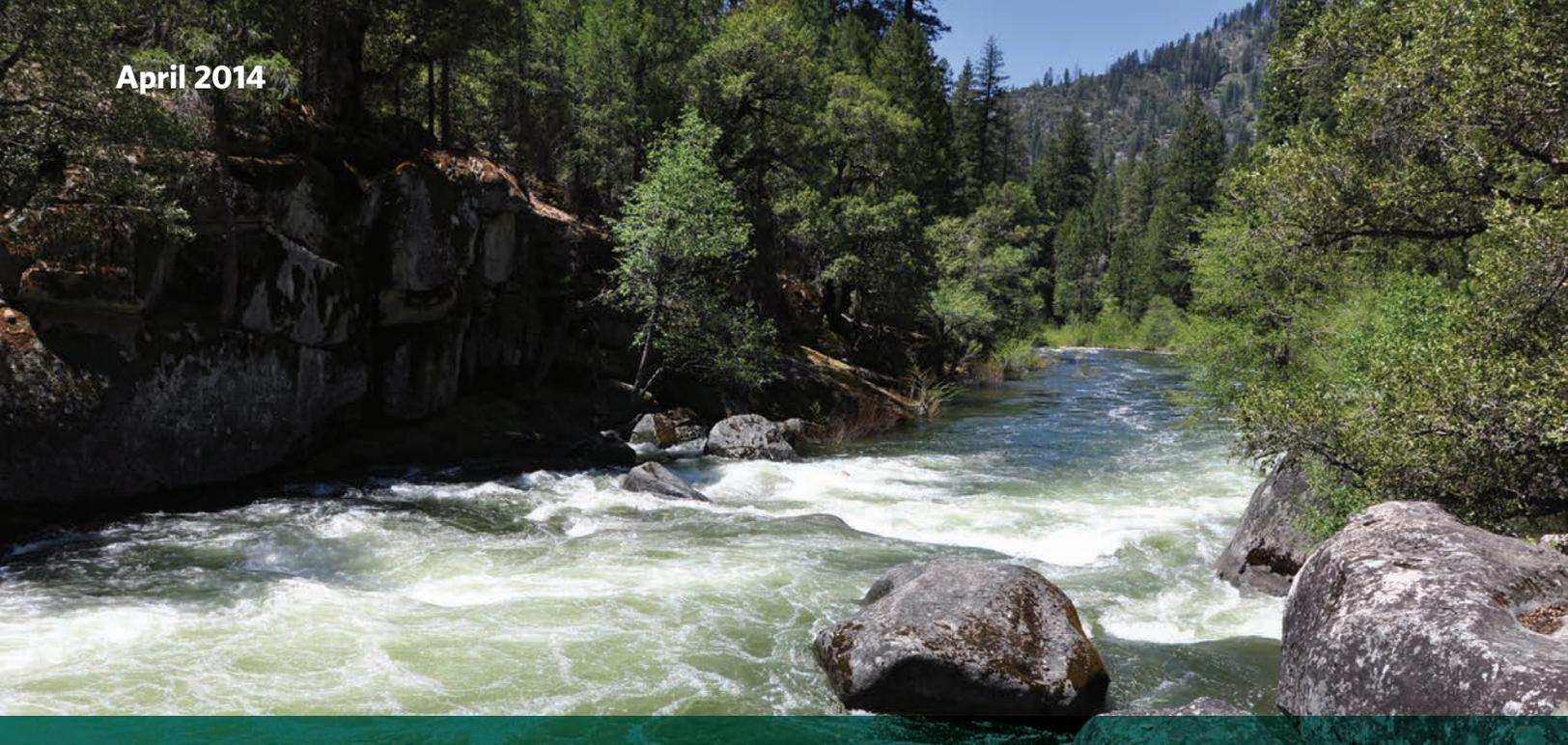
Staff is continuing to have discussions with EBMUD Board members and staff about opportunities to provide direct outreach to their 1.3 million rate payers. EBMUD has offered their outreach tools such as rate payer bill inserts, surveys and focus groups. These tools could be used to educate the rate payers about the high risk conditions of the watershed, as well as gauge their interest in financially supporting forest restoration work.

In partnership with the National Forest Foundation, the Mokelumne Fund has been established. This fund will direct all monies to fuel treatments and restoration projects on Forest Service lands in the upper Mokelumne Watershed. The water users of the East Bay will be the primary target for raising these restoration monies. These monies would be invested in restoration projects located in the areas of the watershed that most directly reduce risks to water supply and water quality. The program development and outreach are at a preliminary stage but more will be reported during a future Board meeting.

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 XII
Mokelumne Watershed Avoided
Cost Analysis
Attachment A



Mokelumne Watershed Avoided Cost Analysis: Why Sierra Fuel Treatments Make Economic Sense

High-severity wildfires in forests of California's Sierra Nevada pose a serious threat to people and nature. Although proactive forest management can reduce the risk of high-severity wildfire, the pace and scale of fuel treatments is insufficient, given the growing scope of the problem. Using the upper Mokelumne River watershed as a representative case, we sought to answer the following question: Does it make economic sense to increase investment in fuel treatments to reduce the risk of large, damaging wildfires? Our analysis suggests that the economic benefits of landscape-scale fuel-reduction treatments far outweigh the costs of wildfire.

Recent wildfires in California and the West have destroyed lives and property, degraded water quality, put water supply at risk, damaged wildlife habitat and cost hundreds of millions of dollars. For example:

- The 2013 Rim Fire—located just south of the Mokelumne River in the central Sierra Nevada—burned nearly 257,000 acres, much of it at high severity, at a cost of more than \$127 million, not including the costs to the economy and tourism.
- The 2013 Yarnell Fire in Arizona killed 19 firefighters, destroyed more than 100 homes and damaged the town's water system.
- The 2002 Hayman Fire in Colorado burned 138,000 acres, destroyed more than 600 structures, and deposited more than 1 million cubic yards of sediment into Strontia Springs Reservoir—a primary drinking water source for the City of Denver—at a growing cost of more than \$150 million.

The Sierra Nevada provides more than 60 percent of the developed water supply for California. High-severity wildfire places this water supply at risk. The upper Mokelumne River watershed in the central Sierra Nevada supplies drinking water to 1.3 million residents of the San Francisco Bay Area and provides valuable goods and services, including but not limited to forest and agricultural products, hydropower energy, recreation, wildlife habitat and carbon sequestration. Like other Sierra Nevada and western watersheds, much of the Mokelumne watershed is at very high risk of wildfire (figure ES-1).

Although wildfire and the associated costs are increasing in the western United States, few studies have taken a hard look at the costs and benefits of fuel treatments to determine if an increased investment in treatments makes economic sense. Through a collaborative process with key stakeholders and using state-of-the-art models for fire, vegetation and post-fire erosion, we analyzed the potential impacts of a landscape-scale fuel treatments program in the upper Mokelumne watershed. In addition, we examined who would benefit the most from investing in fuel treatments and reducing the risk of high-intensity wildfires. Our findings can help inform forest management not only in the Mokelumne watershed, but also in similar watersheds throughout the Sierra Nevada and the western United States.

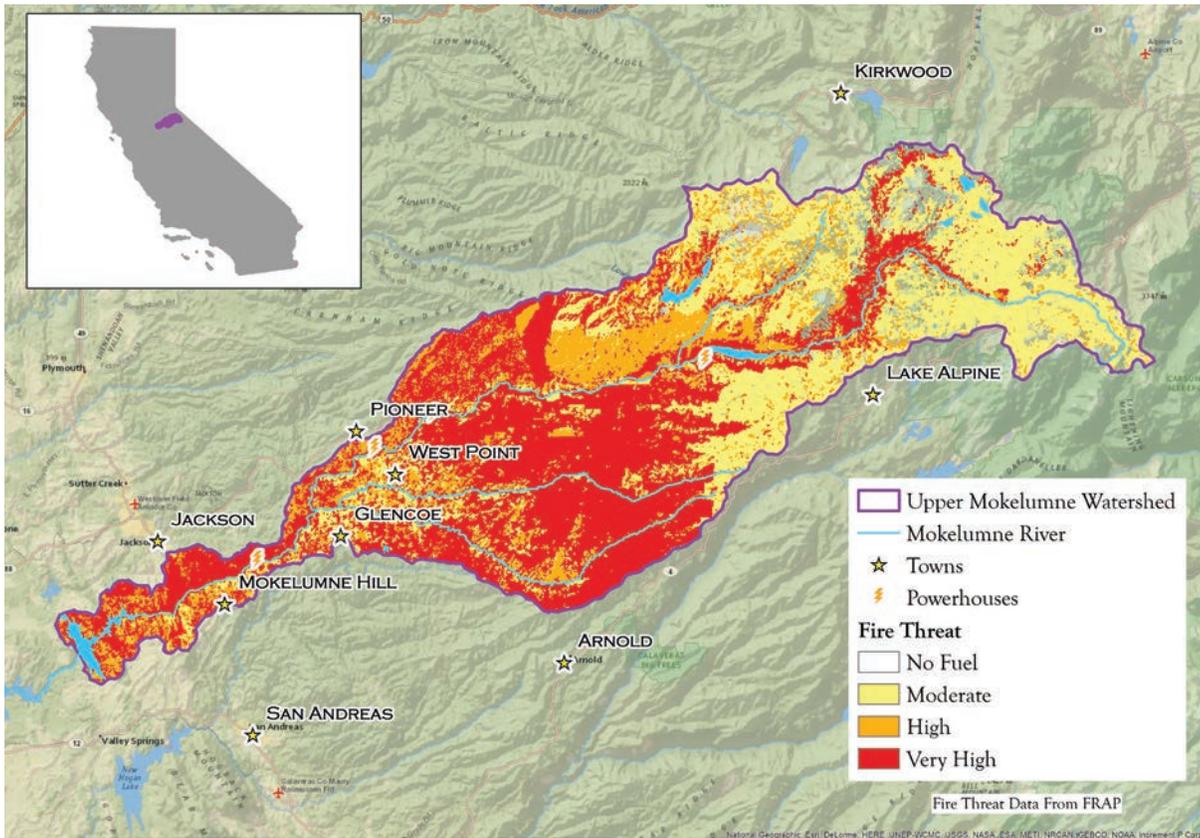


FIGURE ES-1. Fire Hazard in the Upper Mokelumne Watershed

Process

In February 2012, the Sierra Nevada Conservancy, The Nature Conservancy, and the U.S. Forest Service convened a diverse group of stakeholders to consider whether an economic case could be made for increased investment in fuel reduction in the upper Mokelumne watershed. This group included land managers (the Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, Sierra Pacific Industries); water and electric utilities (East Bay Municipal Utility District, Pacific Gas & Electric); state and local agencies (California Department of Water Resources, California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection and county governments); environmental organizations (Sustainable Conservation, Environmental Defense Fund); and local stakeholders (Foothill Conservancy, Amador-Calaveras Consensus Group, West Point Fire District).

We established an Advisory Committee to help guide the overall process and analysis, a Technical Committee to address issues relating to science and modeling, and a consulting team, led by ECONorthwest, to conduct the economic analyses. Using a collaborative process, we developed a site-specific fuel-treatments scenario, targeting areas of high fire risk to homes, communities and utility infrastructure, as well as post-fire sediment erosion risk to waterways. We commissioned studies to simulate the outcomes of future fires with and without fuel treatments—specifically forest thinning and controlled burning. The Advisory Committee, Technical Committee and consultants subsequently reviewed the analysis, vetted and approved each chapter of the report and endorsed the report’s findings and conclusions.

Analysis

Our analysis focused on modeling wildfire in the Mokelumne watershed both with and without implementation of the fuel-treatments scenario. We analyzed the size and intensity of five potential representative fires based on fire history in the region, current forest conditions and state-of-the-art wildfire models. We modeled the fuel-treatments scenario to identify how active forest management would likely modify wildfire behavior and post-fire erosion over a 30-year time period. Using these results, we quantified the financial costs and benefits of the treatments, focusing on those elements to which a dollar value can readily be assigned such as homes, infrastructure, timber, biomass energy, carbon and employment.

The analysis was based on conservative assumptions regarding potential costs and benefits, not a worst-case wildfire scenario. For example, the nearby 2013 Rim Fire was significantly larger than all five modeled fires combined and burned at higher intensity. In addition, we did not consider wildfire impacts with economic values that could not be readily determined, such as the effects of fire on wildlife habitat, recreation, tourism, and public health and cultural sites. Thus, in multiple respects, our conclusions likely underestimate the costs associated with future wildfires and the benefits of active management, suggesting an even stronger case for action.

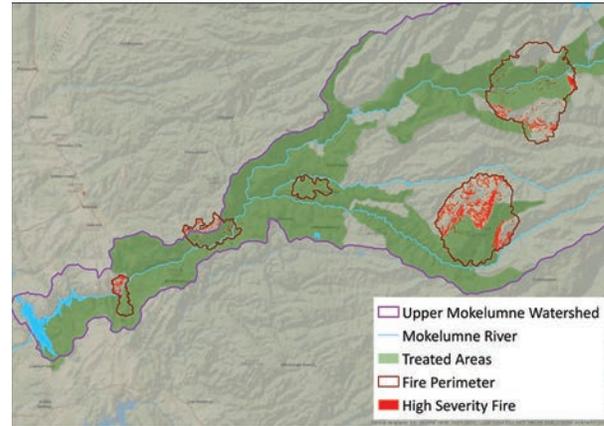
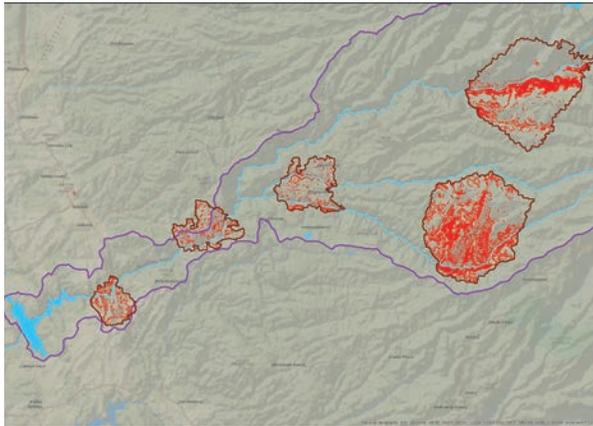


Figure ES-2. High-intensity Wildfire Pre- and Post-Treatments

Key Findings

- Fuel treatments can significantly reduce the size and severity of wildfires.** Proactive forest management can significantly modify fire behavior by reducing fire severity, size and rate of spread. Our results showed that the modeled fuel-treatments scenario reduced the size of each of the five fires by 30 to 76 percent, or a total reduction in size of approximately 41 percent. More importantly, the modeled scenario reduced the acreage of high-intensity wildfire by approximately 75 percent (figure ES-2).
- The economic benefits of modeled fuel treatments are 2-3 times the costs.** In total, across the categories of benefits quantified in this report, the value of avoided costs significantly exceeds the cost of fuels management (figure ES-3). The avoided losses in terms of both costs and lost income opportunities include the value of structures saved from wildfire and the costs of fire suppression and post-fire restoration, as well as potential revenue from carbon sequestration, merchantable timber and biomass that could be used for energy. For each cost category, we estimated a range of values from low to high. Using the high estimates for benefits (\$224 million) results in a

benefit-cost ratio for the fuel-treatments scenario of 3.3:1. Even when applying a more conservative approach, using the low estimate for benefits (\$126 million), the benefits of investing in fuel treatments are nearly twice the costs, with a benefit-cost ratio of approximately 1.9:1.

- There are many beneficiaries from increased fuel treatments, especially taxpayers.** The economic benefits of fuel treatments accrue to a wide range of landowners, public and private entities, taxpayers and utility ratepayers. As shown in figure ES-4, the primary beneficiaries are the State of California, federal government, residential private property owners (and their insurers), timber owners, and water and electric utilities. By comparison, the costs of fuel treatments are largely borne by public land managers (and, by implication, taxpayers). An accelerated fuel-treatments program would also result in an estimated 35-45 jobs relating to fuel treatments and 7-10 biomass-to-energy jobs over a 10-year period. These figures represent a significant addition to the current number of such jobs in these rural areas.

Costs

	Low	High
Fuel Treatment	\$68,000,000	\$68,000,000
Benefits		
Structures Saved	\$32,000,000	\$45,600,000
Avoided Fire Cleanup	\$22,500,000	\$22,500,000
Carbon Sequestered	\$19,000,000	\$71,000,000
Merchantable Timber from Treatment	\$14,000,000	\$27,000,000
Avoided Suppression	\$12,500,000	\$20,800,000
Biomass from Treatment	\$12,000,000	\$21,000,000
Avoided Road Repairs and Reconstruction	\$10,630,000	\$10,630,000
Transmission Lines Saved	\$1,600,000	\$1,600,000
Timber Saved	\$1,200,000	\$3,130,250
Avoided Sediment for Utilities (water supply)	\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000
Total Benefits	\$126,430,000	\$224,260,250

Figure ES-3. Total Costs and Benefits for Fuel-Treatments Scenario



Summary

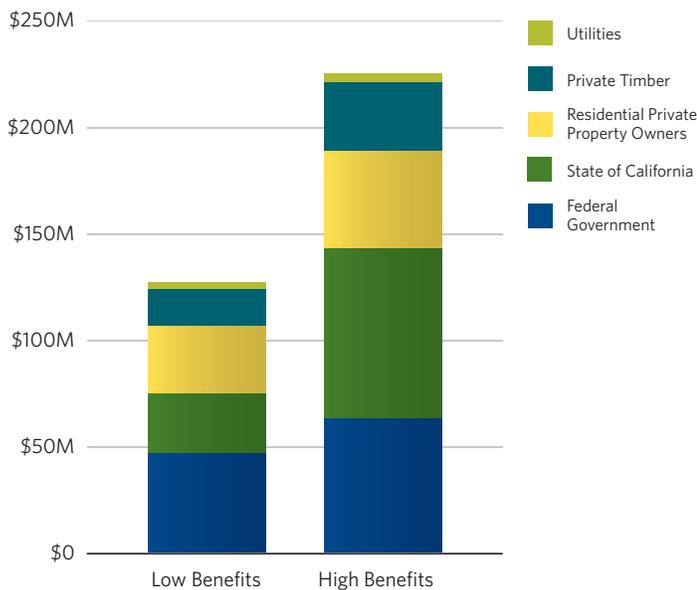


Figure ES-4. Fuel Treatments Beneficiaries



In sum, our analysis shows that it makes economic sense to invest in forest management to reduce the risk of destructive, high-severity wildfires in the upper Mokelumne watershed. Although achieving such benefits requires a significant increase in the pace and scale of fuel treatments, the long-term cost savings far exceed the costs of the initial investment. To the extent that the Mokelumne is representative of other fire-adapted forested watersheds of the Sierra Nevada and the western United States, this report makes the economic case for significantly increasing investment in fuel treatments in western forests.

FOR A COPY OF THE FULL REPORT:

SierraNevada.ca.gov/Mokelumne



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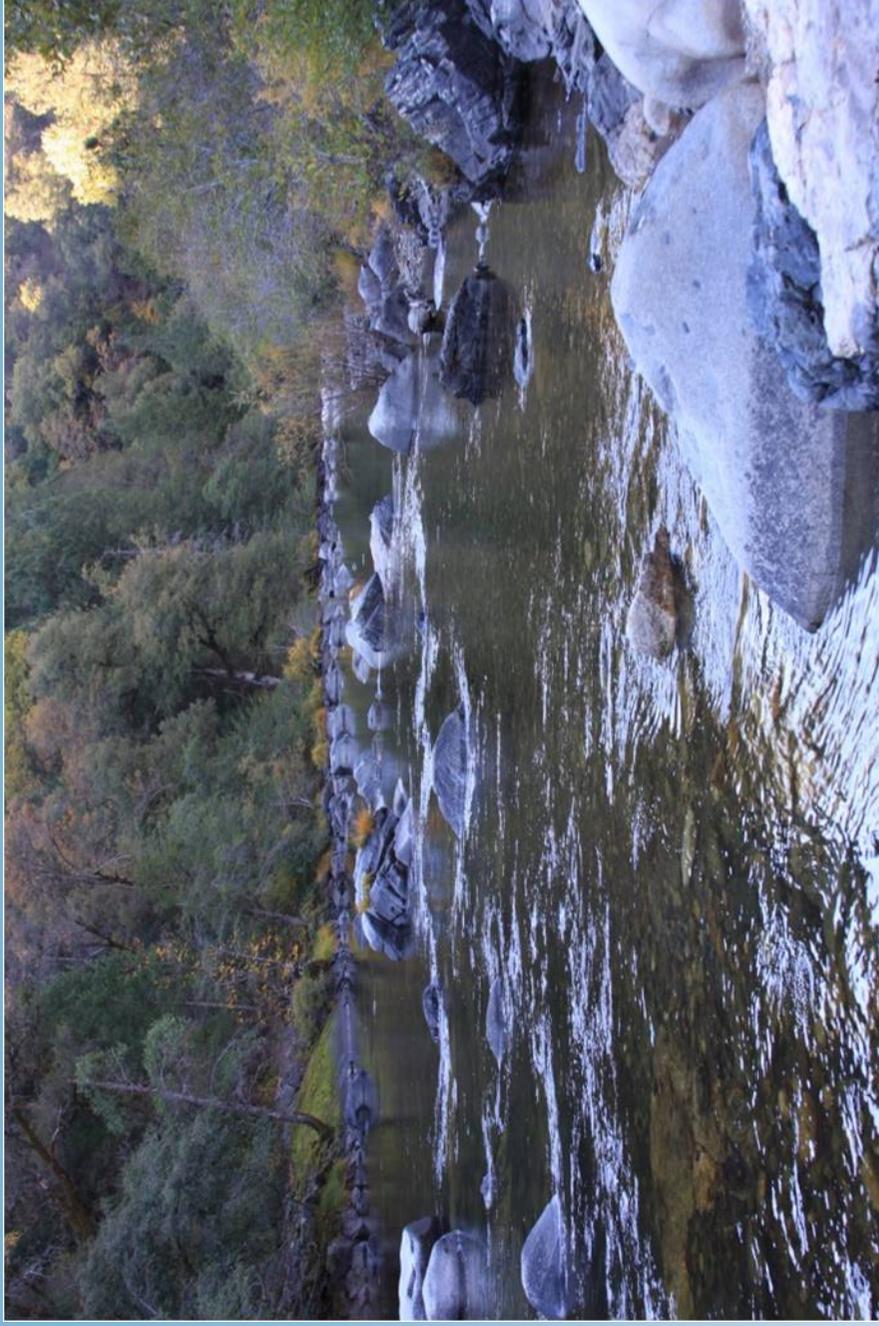


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Agenda Item XII Mokelumne Watershed Avoided Cost Analysis

Presented By:

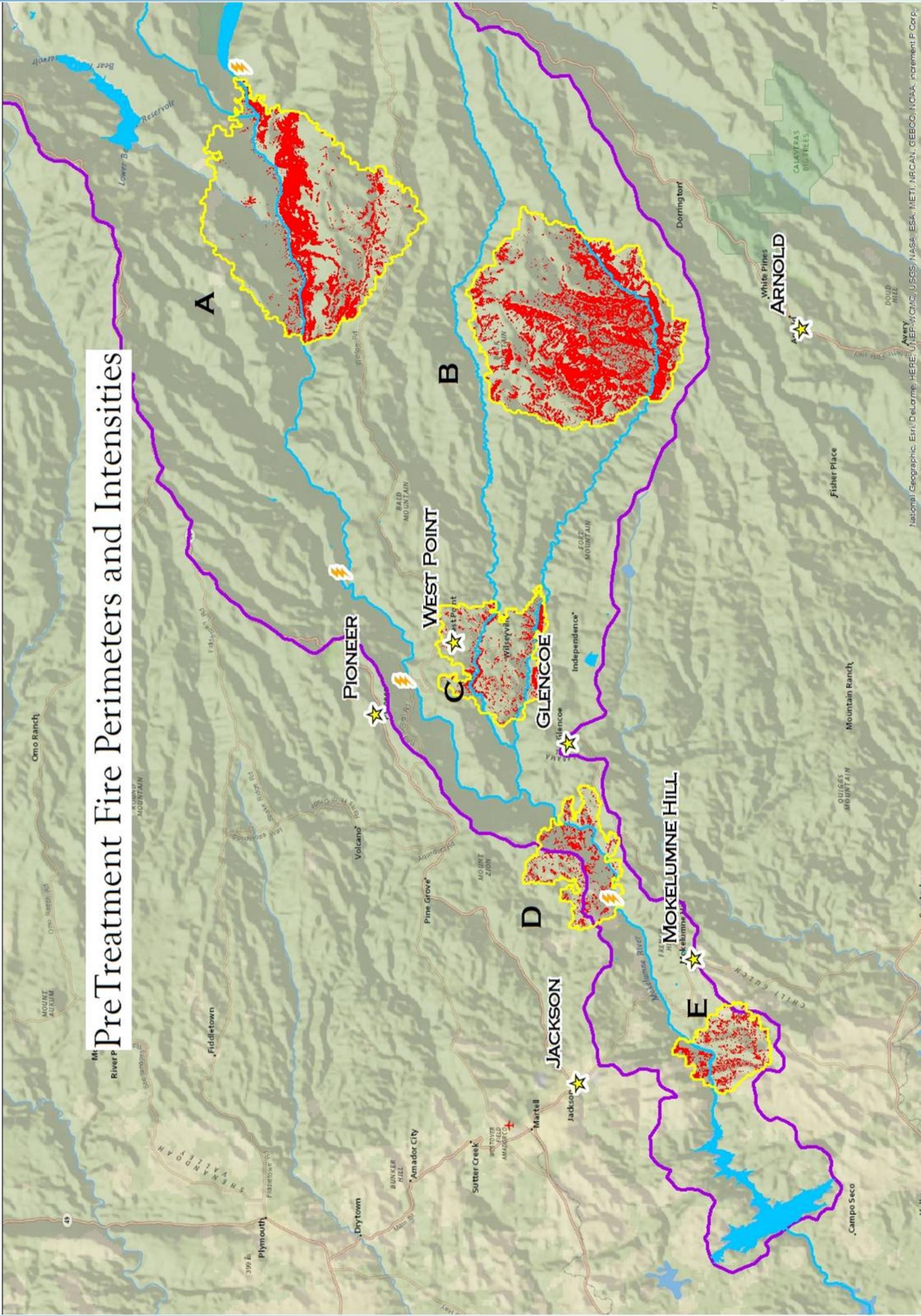
Kim Carr



Key Findings

- Fuel treatments can significantly reduce the size and intensity of wildfires.
- The economic benefits of fuel treatments can be three or more times the costs.
- There are many beneficiaries from increased fuel treatments, especially taxpayers.
- The estimated volume of sediment from post-fire is estimated to be large, however the avoided costs to downstream utilities were less than anticipated.

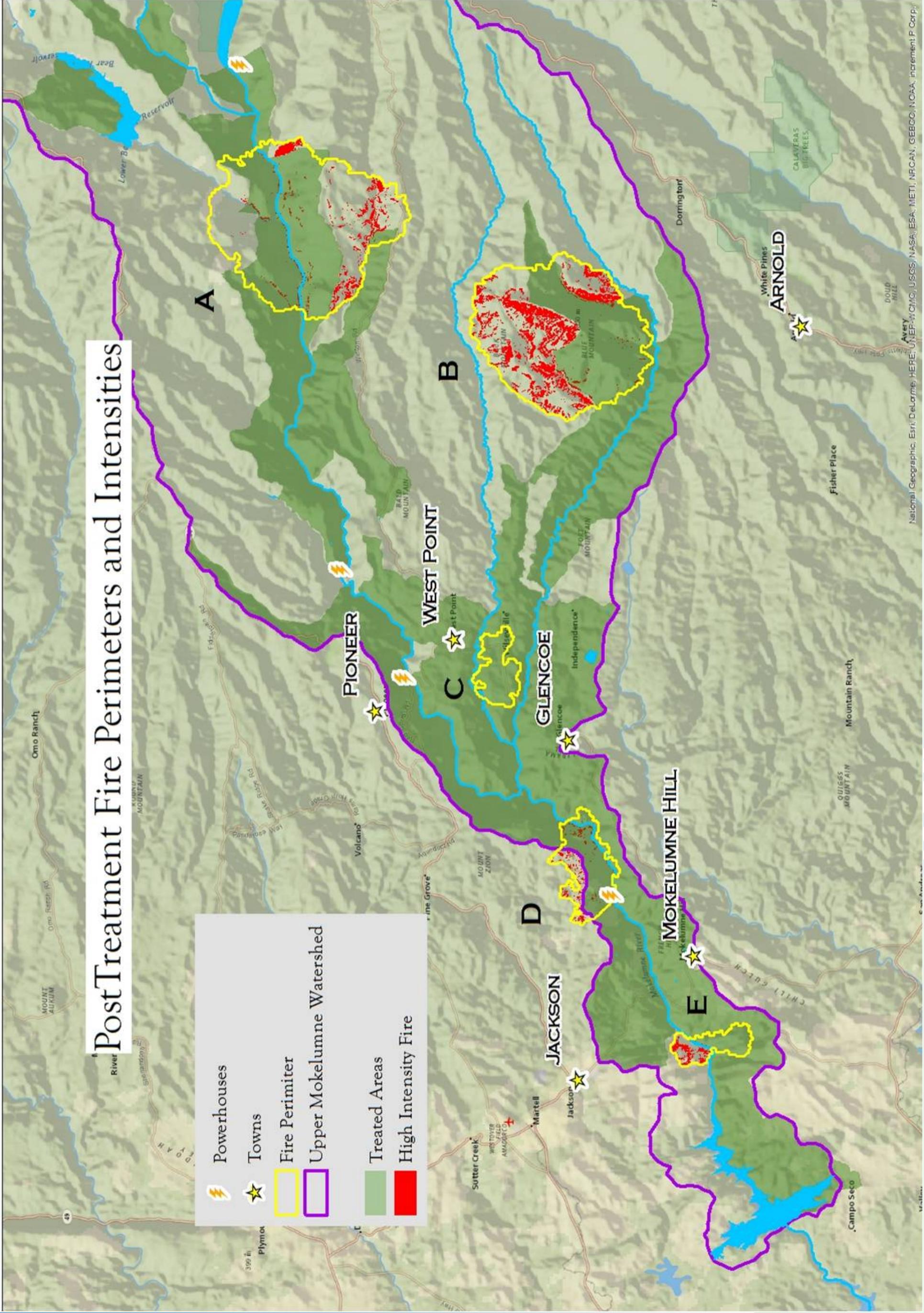
Pre Treatment Fire Perimeters and Intensities



National Geographic, Esri, DeLorme, HERE, UNEP-WCMC, USGS, NASA, ESA, METI, NRCAN, GEBCO, NOAA, increment F Corp, Avery

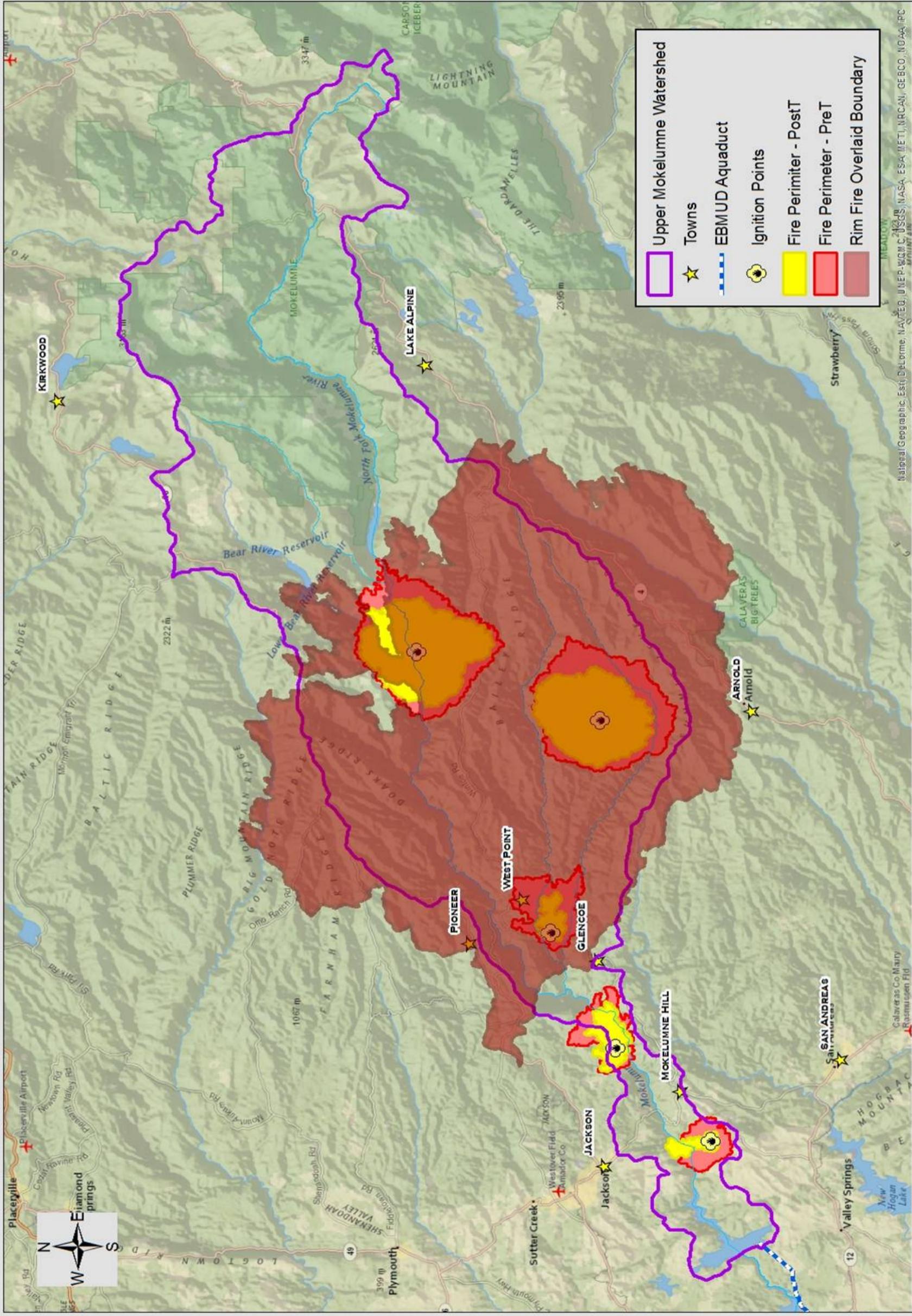
Post Treatment Fire Perimeters and Intensities

	Powerhouses
	Towns
	Fire Perimeter
	Upper Mokelumne Watershed
	Treated Areas
	High Intensity Fire



National Geographic, Esri, DeLorme, HERE, UNEP-WCMC, USGS, NASA, ESA, METI, NRCAN, GEBCO, NOAA, increment P. Corp., Avery

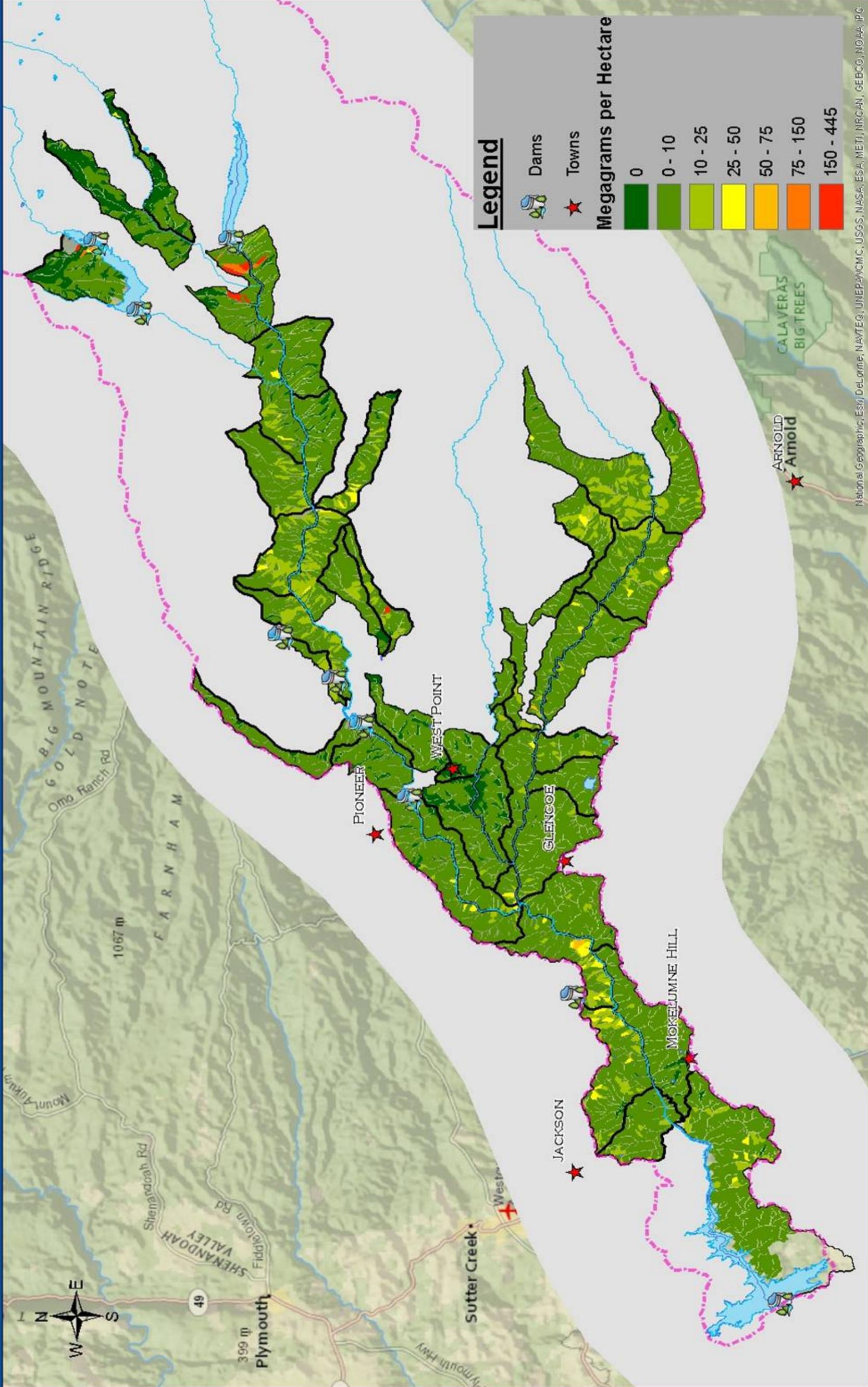
Rim Fire Boundary and Modeled Wildfires



Costs Not Included

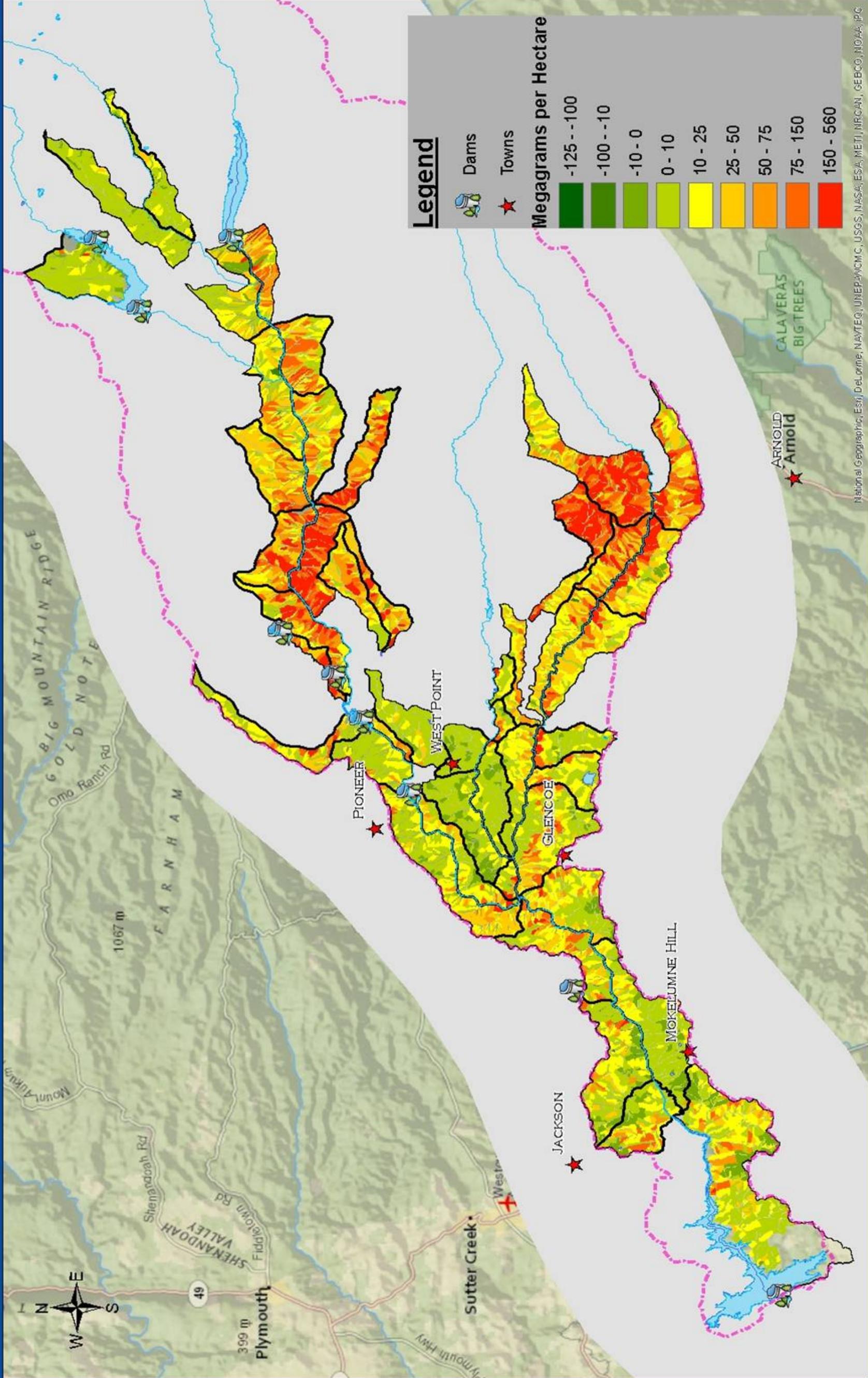
- Water yield and quality
- Air quality
- Pollination
- Habitat and biodiversity
- Aesthetic values
- Recreational values
- Cultural resources

BASELINE: EROSION OF <2MM-SIDED SEDIMENT UNDER CURRENT CONDITIONS

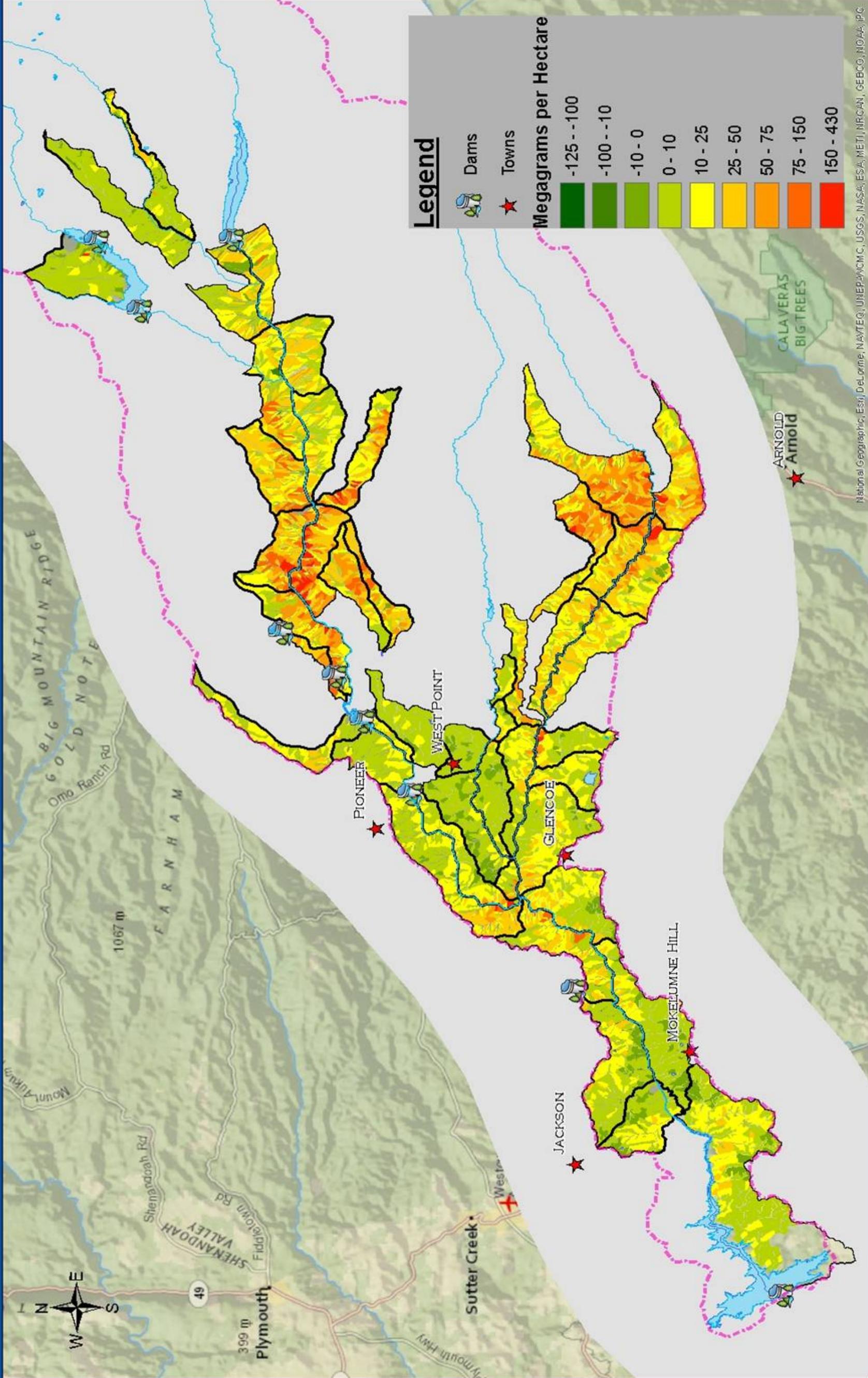


National Geographic, Esri, Delorme, NAVTEQ, UNEP/WCMC, USGS, NASA, ESA, METI, NRCAN, GEBCO, NOAA, IPC

CHANGE IN <2MM-SIZED SEDIMENT EROSION AFTER FIRE AND NO TREATMENTS



CHANGE IN <2MM-SIZED SEDIMENT EROSION AFTER TREATMENTS THEN FIRE

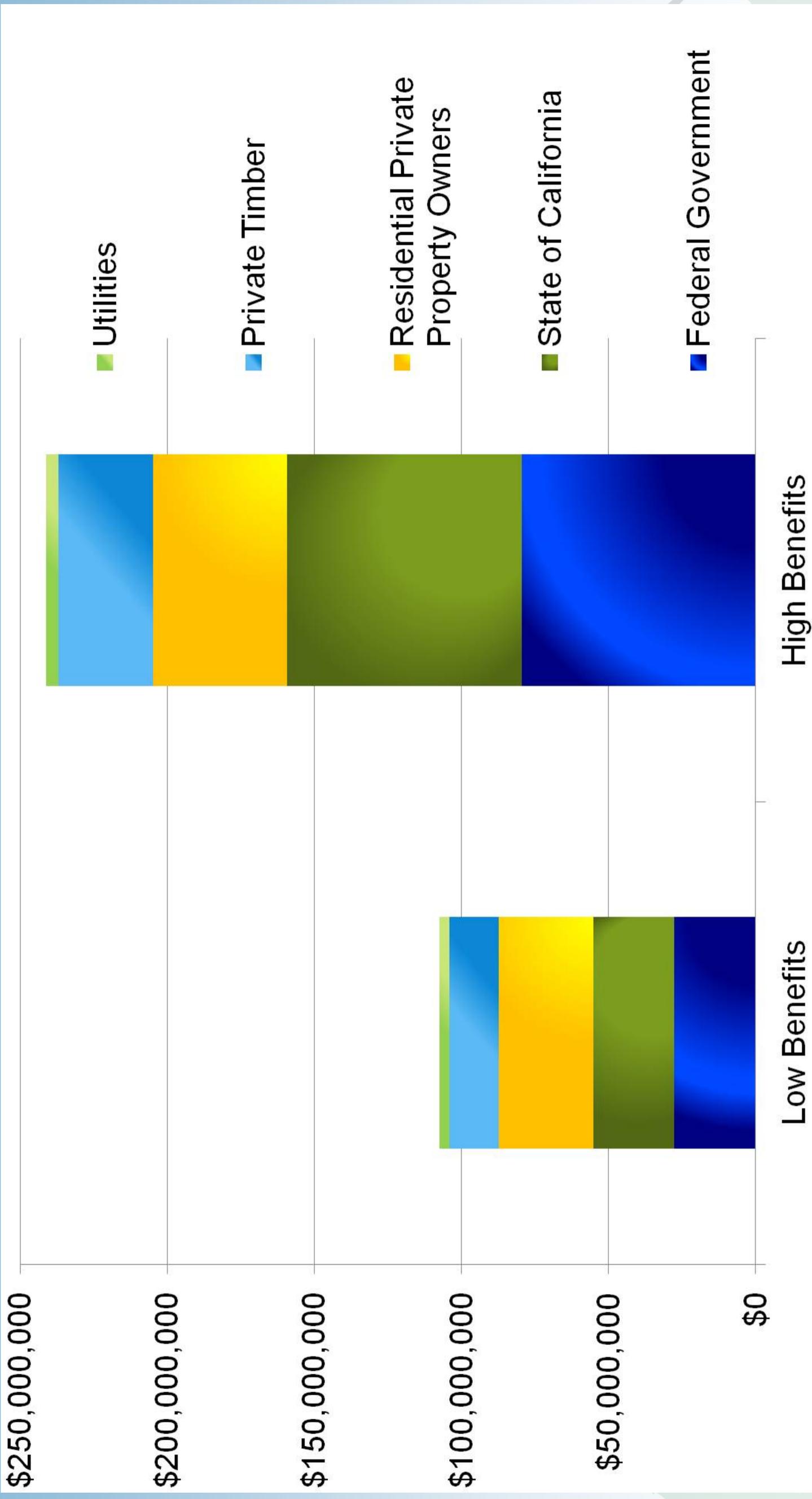


Costs and Benefits of Modeled Fuel Treatments

Figure ES-4. Total costs and benefits for fuel-treatments scenario

Costs		
	Low	High
Fuel Treatment	\$68,000,000	\$68,000,000
Benefits		
Structures Saved	\$32,000,000	\$45,600,000
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Total Benefits	\$126,430,000	\$224,260,250

Fuel Treatment Beneficiaries



Actions Since Report Release

- Large media coverage
- Briefings:
 - Federal agencies, California Congressional offices and Federal Natural Resource Committee staff
 - State legislators and staff
 - EBMUD Board members and staff
- Established NFF's Mokelumne Fund

Ultimate Goals

1. Establish financial mechanisms to raise funds from Water Users to invest in Mokelumne Watershed fuel treatments (Forest to Faucet Program).
2. Develop and implement a large landscape pilot project to promote forest resilience and reduce the risk of high-severity wildfire, with a strong research component to assess ecological impacts.
3. Develop a unit value for water yield savings due to fuel treatments. Use this to raise funds from investors.