

September 1-2, 2010  
Sierra City Community Hall  
13 Castagna Alley (off Hwy 49)  
Sierra City, CA 96125



**September 1, 2010**  
**Board Tour**

**1:30 – 5:00 PM**

Members of the Board and Staff will participate in a field trip focusing on issues and activities relevant to the Conservancy's mission in the North Central Subregion. Members of the public are invited to participate in the field tour but are responsible for their own transportation and lunch.

**Reception**

**5:00 – 7:30 PM**

Following the Board tour, Boardmembers and staff will attend a reception open to the public. The reception will be held at the Big Springs Gardens located at 32613 Highway 49 Sierra City, CA.

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**September 2, 2010**  
**Board Meeting**

**9:00 – 1:00 PM**

*(End time of the meeting is approximate)*

- I. Call to Order**
- II. Roll Call**
- III. Approval of June 3, 2010 Meeting Minutes (ACTION)**
- IV. Public Comments**  
Provide an opportunity for the public to comment on non-agenda items.
- V. Board Chair's Report**
- VI. Executive Officer's Report (INFORMATIONAL)**
  - a. Budget and Staffing
  - b. Grants Update
  - c. North Central Subregion Report
  - d. Great Sierra River Cleanup
  - e. Annual Symposium
  - f. Sierra Nevada Forest and Community Initiative Update
- VII. Deputy Attorney General's Report (INFORMATIONAL)**
- VIII. Pacific Forest and Watershed Lands Stewardship Council (ACTION)**  
The Board may act upon a staff recommendation relating to the Conservancy performing duties to ensure long-term public beneficial values for lands transferred by the Pacific Forest and Watershed Lands Stewardship Council.

**IX. Annual Report (ACTION)**

The Board will review and may act to approve the 2009-10 Annual Report.

**X. Strategic Plan Update (ACTION)**

The Board will be briefed on progress on the Strategic Plan and asked to approve recommendations of staff on possible areas of focus.

**XI. Boardmembers' Comments**

**XII. Public Comments**

**XIII. Adjournment**

Meeting Materials are available on the SNC Web site at [www.sierranevada.ca.gov](http://www.sierranevada.ca.gov). For additional information or to submit written comment on any agenda item, please contact Mrs. Burgess at (530) 823-4672, toll free at (877) 257-1212; or via email at [tburgess@sierranevada.ca.gov](mailto:tburgess@sierranevada.ca.gov). or 11521 Blocker Drive, Suite 205, Auburn CA 95603. If you need reasonable accommodations please contact Mrs. Burgess at least **five** working days in advance, including documents in alternative formats.

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**Closed Session:** Following, or at any time during the meeting, the Conservancy may recess or adjourn to closed session to consider pending or potential litigation; property negotiations; or personnel-related matters. Authority: Government Code Section 11126(a), (c) (7), or (e).

Board Meeting Minutes  
June 3, 2010  
Turtle Rock Park, Community Center  
17300 State Route 89  
Markleeville, CA 96120



**I. Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order by Board Chair Kirwan.

**II. Roll Call**

**Present:** John Brissenden, Todd Ferrara, Brian Dahle, David Graber, Kathy Hardy, Bob Johnston, Bob Kirkwood, B.J. Kirwan, Bill Nunes, Don Jardine, Rob Macwharter, and Paolo Maffei.

**Absent:** Jon McQuiston, Hal Stocker, and Tom Sheehy.

**III. Approval of March 3, 2010 Meeting Minutes**

There were no changes to the meeting minutes.

**ACTION: Boardmember Kirkwood moved and Boardmember Dahle seconded a motion to approve the March 3, 2010 Meeting Minutes. The motion passed unanimously.**

**IV. Public Comments**

Tony Taylor, Board Chair of the Eastern Sierra Land Trust and member of the Sierra Cascade Land Trust Council, thanked the SNC for the support and the two grants they have received. Taylor said the Land Trust's work protected about 7,000 acres of Sierra Nevada lands, comprised of ranches, farms, scenic and wildlife areas.

**V. Chairman's Report**

Board Chair Kirwan thanked Boardmembers Jardine and Brissenden for hosting the Board meeting in Alpine County and for the prior day's tour of the East Carson River Riparian Restoration Project in Markleeville and the Hope Valley, West Carson River ADA river access project.

The Board was advised that the next meeting would be September 1-2. On the suggestion of SNC Executive Officer Jim Branham, Kirwan asked the Board to approve changing the locations of the next two meetings due to winter weather concerns. The Board agreed to hold the September meeting in the North Central Subregion (Sierra County) and the December meeting in the South Central Subregion (Sonora area of Tuolumne County).

**VI. Executive Officer's Report (INFORMATIONAL)**

SNC Executive Officer Jim Branham referred Boardmembers to a sign-up sheet and urged them to participate in the SNC's "signature" event, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Great Sierra River Cleanup, September 25, with events occurring in every watershed in the

Sierra. He noted that at this time, seven legislators have signed on as Honorary Co-Chairs.

**A. Budget and Staffing**

Branham said spending for the current year is on track with the exception of the funding held up by the bond freeze. He added that there are no surprises in the SNC's budget as proposed within the "Governor's Budget" for the coming 2010-11 Fiscal Year, with the SNC funded at a similar level to this year, while cautioning that there is a long way to go in the budget process.

Branham said that following the lift of the bond freeze, the SNC has about \$20 million remaining in appropriated Proposition 84 funds for grants.

Branham introduced Theresa Parsley as the new Administrative Chief, who recently worked with SNC to prepare the Sierra Nevada Climate Action Plan.

**B. Recap of Strategic Planning Workshop and Next Steps**

SNC Assistant Executive Officer Joan Keegan gave an overview of the strategic planning process. She said that as part of the SNC's five-year update of its Strategic Plan, it is doing a strategic assessment of how the organization has done in its first five years as reflected against its guiding principles and original program areas. The strategic assessment will also seek input from a broad group of stakeholders and partners to identify high priority "areas of focus" that cut across program areas and integrate activities across the region. Part of this effort will include considering what organizations in the Sierra Nevada Region are doing in order to leverage the collective efforts of others and to fill any identified gaps in Regional activity and support.

The strategic assessment process was kicked off the day before with the Strategic Planning Workshop, in which 12 Boardmembers, four past Boardmembers, 13 stakeholders and nine SNC staff participated. The mission, vision and guiding principles were discussed, but the main objective was to brainstorm initial ideas to be included as recommendations for Board consideration as potential areas of focus for the plan.

A list of potential areas of focus emerged covering a wide range of activities. Keegan said the next steps will be to refine this list through additional stakeholder meetings and to send out a survey from the SNC web site asking for feedback on the list and on how the SNC is doing with its guiding principles. Staff will begin researching funding opportunities and also what other organizations in the Region are doing in these areas of focus. In September the list of focus areas will be brought back to the Board for review, followed by more stakeholder review, and a final list to be presented for the Board's decision in December.

Workshops will be held around the Region in the spring of 2011 to develop goals, strategies and actions for each approved area of focus. Keegan anticipates a draft Strategic Plan would be prepared for the June 2011 Board meeting. Following the June meeting, the plan would be open for public comment, and the final plan will be ready for Board review in September of 2011.

Kirwan announced that Boardmembers Johnston and Maffei offered to serve as a committee of the Board for the strategic planning efforts.

### **C. Grants Update**

Referring to information in the Board's staff report, Program Manager Kerri Timmer reviewed the history of the grant program, the state bond freeze, recent "conditional" grant authorizations by the Board, and the eventual re-start process.

The Bond freeze was lifted April 27<sup>th</sup>, and the Department of Finance and the State Treasurer's Office have put a new process in place whereby the applicants and the SNC will need to estimate the need for funds in advance to cover the projects, so the cash flow situation that cause the bond freeze would be avoided. Also, a bond sale was held April 10 that generated all the funds needed for the 14 conditionally awarded projects from the December Board meeting. The bond sale provided enough "new" funding to allow the SNC to launch a new grant solicitation using the guidelines approved by the Board in September of 2009. Timmer said she anticipates the solicitation will go out in early July, with a deadline for applications of late August or early September, and bring projects back to the Board for authorization in March of 2011. Timmer said that the new process being put in place by the Department of Finance and the Treasurer's Office may require some minor changes to the Grant Guidelines.

Timmer said the SNC continues to work with re-started grant recipients, and has 23 that have come to conclusion. Invoices processed total 440 on previously frozen projects, resulting in \$7.5 million "out the door." The SNC has also expanded its funding team and continues to send information about funding and application opportunities to other organizations which have yielded some success stories.

Timmer also reported that a standard audit of the Proposition 84 program is being conducted, looking at the SNC's internal processes, projects awarded to date, and how the SNC is ensuring the proper expenditure of the funds.

Boardmember Graber noted that it would be difficult for the Grants team to estimate the amount of funds needed since it is for grants and not operational costs, and Timmer agreed.

Timmer asked if the Board would like to establish a committee to review the format used to present grant information to the Board at future meetings. Boardmembers Kirkwood and Dahle agreed to serve as a committee of the Board and review the format for materials provided to the Board.

Branham congratulated the Grants Administrative team of Angela Avery, Lisa Forma and Barbara Harriman for their hard work in staying up with all the requests for information coming from the State control agencies.

#### **D. East Subregion Report**

SNC Mt. Whitney Area Senior Representative Julie Bear gave an overview of the SNC's East Subregion, which includes Alpine County and portions of Mono and Inyo Counties. To date this Subregion has received 21 grants for a total of almost \$1,750,000. This Subregion is primarily rural and the sparse population of just under 32,000 residents is spread over approximately 7,300 square miles within the SNC boundary. Unemployment is approximately 19 percent, which is about seven percent above the state average.

About 96 percent of the land in this Subregion is under public ownership and management by the U.S. Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management (BLM), and the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power. Pine forests and alpine meadows surround 14 of the 15 highest peaks in the contiguous United States.

Bear noted that the scarcity of privately owned land in this Subregion has played a prominent role in the sparse populations, limited growth projections, and lack of affordable housing that characterizes this portion of the SNC Region. She indicated this factor also affects the number and type of projects coming from the Subregion, identifying the projects that have been funded, reporting on two in particular:

- The Alpine Watershed Group Water Monitoring Program which will monitor water quality and discharge in an area that encompasses the headwaters of three of the five major watersheds including the Carson, Mokelumne, and Stanislaus.
- The Inyo-Mono Integrated Regional Watershed Management Planning Project will provide a framework within which to address water issues such as supply, quality, habitat and environment, recreation, and land use by working collaboratively with over 30 stakeholders throughout the Subregion.

Dennis Cocking, Public and Legislative Affairs with the South Tahoe Public Utility District (STPUD), presented the district's history and activities. STPUD was created in 1950 and is responsible for providing drinking water, as well as environmentally responsible wastewater collection and treatment and export for the community of South Tahoe.

Cocking said the district is subject to the Porter-Cologne water quality control act, which controls waste water. Regardless of the level of treatment, all water treated in the Lake Tahoe Basin must be exported out of the basin area. Cocking said STPUD exports approximately four million gallons a day from the basin. The water is then stored in a system of tanks and reservoirs, providing recreation and irrigation in the summer months.

#### **E. Sierra Day in the Capitol**

Keegan noted that the SNC took over the coordination role of the Sierra Day in the Capitol this year after the Sierra Fund and Sierra Nevada Alliance had conducted the activities for a number of years.

On April 14th, 54 individuals from 28 diverse organizations assembled at the Capitol to raise awareness among legislators and their staff about the importance of the Sierra Nevada and the benefits the Region provides to the entire state.

Keegan reported that Sierra Day participants, including SNC Boardmember Maffei, began the day with presentations from Assemblyman Jim Nielsen and Senator Fran Pavley regarding the issues they believe are important to the Region and the state. Maffei reported that it was a hard day's work and was very successful.

Keegan said the teams reported that they received very positive reviews from the legislators and their staff who were impressed that such a diverse group of interests had come together to deliver a unified message about the importance of the Sierra Nevada.

The SNC also unveiled a Sierra Nevada water display and photo gallery outside the Governor's Office, which was lined with large photographs on loan from artists throughout the Sierra.

#### **F. Geotourism Update**

Mt. Lassen Area Manager Bob Kingman updated the Board on recent developments on the Sierra Nevada Geotourism Web site project, a partnership between the SNC, National Geographic's Sustainable Destinations program, and the Sierra Business Council. He said the

partnership was working to convene the Geo Councils. He referred the Board to the staff report for a full list of activities and background to date.

Kingman reported the three-month nomination period for the Tahoe/Emigrant Corridor phase of the site has been opened, and added that the U.S. Forest Service submitted a grant application to the Federal Highways Administration's Scenic Byways Program to translate the Yosemite Gateways phase of the project into Spanish.

The Web site metrics indicated that thus far persons from 61 countries have logged on to the site to learn about Geotourism and the Sierra Nevada. Kingman said these metrics and others will be continually reported to the partners in the project.

**VII. Proposed Changes to the Conservancy's Conflict of Interest Code (ACTION)**

Deputy Attorney General Christine Sproul reported that some additional changes needed to be made to the SNC's Conflict of Interest (COI) Code in order to get final approval of code amendments from the Fair Political Practices Commission (FPPC) by conforming the SNC's proposed amendments to statewide changes made by the FPPC in the last year. Sproul recommended that the Executive Officer be given the authority to approve the COI amendments once the public comment period closes, provided no substantive changes are recommended by the public.

**ACTION: Boardmember Kirkwood moved and Boardmember Brissenden seconded the motion to adopt the staff recommended resolution authorizing the Executive Officer to approve and adopt amendments to the Conflict of Interest Code for SNC. Should substantive changes to the proposed amendments be recommended, the Executive Officer is directed to present the revised package to the Board for approval. The motion passed unanimously.**

**VIII. Sustainable Sierra Nevada Initiative (ACTION)**

Executive Officer Branham indicated that this item represents a significant step for the SNC. He recalled for the Board that a draft resolution on this item was originally presented at the March Board meeting. Since that time, the SNC has opened the resolution for public comment and received more input on this issue than any other agenda item to date. He noted that the revised resolution before the Board reflected that input, and was ready for Board discussion and approval. The name of the initiative was also changed to the "Sierra Nevada Forest and Community Initiative" (SNFCI) to reflect the connection between the forests and communities in the Sierra.

As background, Branham said that as SNC staff had met with stakeholders and local collaborative groups throughout the Region, the themes of healthy forests, reducing fire risks, and creating sustainable economic activities in Sierra communities came up time and time again. He said the SNC could serve the Region more effectively with a more strategically coordinated initiative beyond its current grant program.

Mt. Whitney Area Manager Kim Carr said staff has been meeting with numerous stakeholders and local collaborative groups. Carr recapped the vision of the SNFCI based on the following needs:

- Reducing catastrophic fire,
- Creation of jobs and sustainable, viable local economies,
- Protection and development of the infrastructure needed to process and manufacture the material being pulled off the forest,
- Development of biomass energy,
- Maintaining a healthy water supply and natural storage of water,
- Overcoming a long history of conflict and controversy, and;
- Improving air quality impacts due to current under-management of forests.

Carr provided additional information regarding fire history and local collaborative efforts occurring in the Region. She noted that a successful effort on the Sierra National Forest could be used as a model in other areas.

SNFCI will be a good fit for the SNC, according to Carr, because it addresses all three areas of the SNC's mission and all seven of its program areas. The feedback received to date indicates the SNC is positioned perfectly to facilitate this issue as a third party convener role, not as a land owner or land manager.

Branham added that the Resolution and the Initiative are stronger because of the comments received. He said SNFCI is not intended to be the "end all" or supplant other initiatives, and that it will require working closely with public land managers, as well as private land owners. As a next step, SNC would pull together the key stakeholders from the various sectors to create a coordinating council to guide the effort.

Boardmember Kirkwood said he thought the document was a "great piece of work," and that it would be a perfect role for the SNC to play. He requested that the SNC replace the term "locally based family wage" with "locally based economically sustainable jobs" throughout the document.

Boardmember Brissenden added his support and recommended the SNC consider a suggestion raised at the previous day's workshop by Katherine Evatt with the Foothill Conservancy. Evatt suggested that the SNC develop a "Sierra collaborative best management practices program."

Boardmember Johnston asked why the Initiative was limited to public lands, given the rampant subdividing of private lands in high fire hazard areas in the Sierra, and the potential that that brings for loss of life and property. Branham responded that the Initiative focuses on public lands because the process for managing public lands is where the SNC can make the biggest impact. However, as it relates to appropriately-scaled infrastructure, he indicated that the SNC will be cognizant of

what is happening on the private lands, in partnership with local government and through the private landowners involved in the local collaborative groups. He also noted that the SNC is prohibited from being involved in local land use decisions.

Carr added within the local collaborative groups there is great interest with the private lands and they will be in the mix of projects and priorities. Groups like the Fire Safe Councils and the RCD's are moving projects forward.

Boardmember Nunes stated that he is looking forward to participating in the Initiative. He appreciated the SNC's outreach efforts, which he believes raised interest as well as the level of understanding about the issue in his Subregion.

Boardmember Ferrara asked what the near term milestones would be. Branham stated one measuring stick will be the degree to which the SNC can assist at the local level of in creating activity on the ground. He also pointed to finding common ground on policy issues such as stewardship contracts and the issue of whether to count biomass energy from materials removed from public lands should be counted as renewable energy.

Carr added another measure of progress comes from the number of cottage industries and entrepreneurial activity that leads to job creation.

Boardmember Graber said he very much supports the Initiative. He urged the SNC to retain the services of subject-matter experts, such as a sociologist and an economist, to help with fact-checking especially on the economic and social impacts.

Boardmember Kirkwood said that as part of the Initiative the SNC might consider working with counties to "retire" unbuildable lots that are present high fire hazards.

**Public Comment:**

Warren Alford, Sierra Forest Legacy, said that the 100 or so groups that make up Sierra Forest Legacy are "wildly enthusiastic" about the idea of managing the forest for ecological needs and addressing the material that comes off the forest as an opportunity. He said that the Sierra forests need the new infrastructure for "post and pole" production as well as for pellets for wood-burning stoves. These pellets are currently are not manufactured in California. He added that the Initiative creates a huge economic opportunity for local communities.

Calaveras County Supervisor and former SNC Boardmember Steve Wilensky spoke in favor of the resolution, saying that it is the best way to combine resources in a strategic way that allows parties to act together. He noted that there were once 22 mills in his supervisorial district alone, and that now there are none in the entire three-county area. The contractors in his area who are working on the CHIPS project are about a year away from going under and they will be needed to do the thinning of the forest, according to Wilensky.

Wilensky said the SNC will need good science and a collaborative approach to convince downstream water users, and those who never see the Sierra, that they should recognize the worth of the Sierra. He added the need to establish a relationship between the forest and the issues surrounding water, climate and safety in clear, unmistakable scientific terms.

Brett Storey, Placer County, spoke on behalf of Supervisor and former SNC Boardmember Robert Weygandt, urging the Board to pass the resolution and said the Placer County Board of Supervisors is looking forward to signing on in support.

Chuck Peck, The Sierra Foothill Conservancy Land Trust, spoke in favor of the resolution. He also asked the Board to provide recognition and thanks to private land owners, who, at tremendous personal sacrifice, have found ways to thin, clear and otherwise properly manage their properties in the Sierra to reduce the risk of large damaging fires. Peck said he would like to see the State of California make it easier for landowners to do good things on their land.

Megan Wargo, The Pacific Forest Trust (PFT), said her nonprofit land trust group is working to conserve private forest lands. She reported that the PFT has begun a similar initiative for private lands in the Cascade Range and the northern part of the Sierra, and that Bob Kingman will be sitting on the convening council for that effort as the SNC's liaison.

Responding to Boardmember Brissenden's earlier request, Branham said the Conservancy did not have a problem with replacing the term "management" with "stewardship" in the resolution, so long as it understood that "stewardship" will include forms of human intervention.

**Action: Boardmember Kirkwood moved and Boardmember Brissenden seconded the motion to adopt the Sierra Nevada Forest and Community Resolution with the following changes: replacing the term "management" with "stewardship" and replacing the term "locally based family wage" with "locally based economically sustainable jobs". The Board also directed staff to take the necessary steps for the successful implementation of the resolution. The motion passed unanimously.**

Board Chair Kirwan asked Boardmember Nunes to serve on the SNFCI Coordinating Council, and Boardmember Kirkwood volunteered as a second participant. Kirwan congratulated the SNC staff, presenters and those who added public comment to an "historic" resolution. She said it was an ambitious, but very appropriate initiative for the SNC to undertake and that she hopes that all Californians, including her fellow Southern Californians, will better appreciate the work of the SNC and the value of the Sierra.

## **IX. Pacific Forest and Watershed Lands Stewardship Council (ACTION)**

Branham reported on the ongoing discussions between the SNC and the Stewardship Council over the role the SNC might play in relation to lands previously owned by Pacific Gas and Electric (PG&E), which are donated to eligible entities. So far the Stewardship Council has approved one property for donation. The Council is set to sunset in 2013.

Branham said it has been made clear to the Stewardship Council from the beginning that if there were a role for the SNC to play, it would not include seeking easements or ownership of these lands. Branham noted the Board's materials included a list of potential roles for the SNC put forward by the Stewardship Council. These include serving as a back-up and successor for holding easements if necessary, serving as a repository for land management plans and reports, serving as a covenant holder for lands donated to the federal entities, and serving as an approver of secondary fee title holders if necessary.

Mt. Lassen Area Senior Representative Linda Hansen reported that progress has been made in defining SNC's role since the last Board meeting. She added that she hopes a well-formulated plan will be available to the Board at its September meeting.

Sproul stated she has been working with the Stewardship Council and SNC staff, and has some concerns about potential roles for the SNC. She said that she would like to examine some specific property transfers as case studies to help the SNC consider this issue further. Sproul said she is looking forward to coming back to the Board in September with more definitive recommendations.

Boardmember Brissenden said he feels it is important to go forward more rapidly to enhance the SNC's profile within the Region. He expressed interest in members of the Board meeting with the Stewardship Council to help move things along. Brissenden suggested that if sufficient funds are not available, the issue might have to be brought back to the Courts or the Public Utilities Commission. He also suggested a donation envelope be placed in PG&E ratepayer's bills.

Boardmember Kirkwood expressed concern over relationships in the future between the SNC and the federal agencies, should the SNC agree to serve in a "covenant" role for lands held by federal agencies. In response, Boardmember Hardy said there would need to be fairly specific guidelines for the SNC should it take on the role of a covenant holder and monitor for any property where the Bureau of Land Management becomes a donee.

#### **X. Boardmembers' Comments**

Brissenden presented to the Board a book on Alpine County trails, signed by the authors. He also thanked SNC staff Brandon Sanders and Theresa Burgess as well as Sarah Green, Watershed Coordinator with the Alpine Watershed Group, historian Frank Torterich of Sorensen's Resort, and Debbie Waldear, President of Friends of Hope Valley for assisting in the Board meeting, field tour and reception.

**XI. Public Comments**

There were not public comments.

**XII. Adjournment**

Board Chair Kirwan adjourned the meeting at 12:05PM.

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## **Background**

California's ongoing fiscal crisis continues to impact all state agencies, their stakeholders, grantees, vendors, and service levels. The 2010-11 projected \$19 billion General Fund shortfall and legislative difficulties in reaching agreement on how to eliminate the deficit have left all state departments wondering how they will be affected. The SNC is no different, however, we are cautiously optimistic because 1) we receive no direct General Fund dollars, and 2) the Environmental License Plate Fund (ELPF), our primary support fund, appears to be steady for the moment. As of the May Revision to the Governor's 2010-11 Proposed Budget the ELPF was projected for steady growth; about 9% for 2009-10 and an additional 5% for 2010-11.

We are in the fourth year of administering the Proposition 84 funds through our grant program. Updates on the Grant Program are being presented separately.

## **Current Status**

### ***FY 2009-10***

As shown in Table 1 for this agenda item, the SNC spent \$4.1 of the \$4.5 million appropriated for State operations in 2009-10. Several factors contributed to the reversion of the \$400,000:

- Furloughs—the Governor required that most state employees, including all SNC employees, be furloughed three days each month for the entire year, resulting in a decrease of about \$270,000, which equates to approximately 7,000 hours of permanent staff time. This is the time equivalent to nearly 4 full time positions.
- Executive Order S-01-10 dated January 22, 2010 was issued ordering departments to begin implementing a Statewide Workforce Cap to realize an additional 5 percent in salary savings over their base salary savings. Including regular salary savings, the SNC was required to save a total of \$87,768.
- Proposition 84 Support – Due to an unfilled Proposition 84 position and the continued freeze on bond-funded projects, the SNC had reduced expenditures in the Proposition 84 support budget, as well.

### ***FY 2010-11***

As of the writing of this report the budget for fiscal year 2010-11 had not yet been approved. The Governor had proposed an operations budget of \$4.77 million, which included the return of funds that had been reduced for furloughs. This budget had not yet been adjusted for anticipated additional 2010-11 furlough impact. No appropriations for Proposition 84 grant funds are included in this budget, as the SNC has previously appropriated funds adequate to meet this year's need.

## **Staffing**

After a short furlough reprieve for the month of July, all SNC staff are back on three unpaid furlough days each month, beginning in August 2010 and continuing until a State budget is passed. Until the budget passes SNC offices are closed the second, third, and

fourth Fridays of each month. SNC staff is dealing with this 15 percent work time loss by prioritizing their workload and seeking to work even more efficiently. Despite these efforts the furloughs do take a toll on workload capacity and have impacted work output for over a year.

SNC employees were spared the potential of receiving federal minimum wage by a temporary court order. Depending on how long it takes to complete the budget negotiations, this threat could return later in the year. SNC staff continues to carry out their duties commendably without regard to the real and potential impacts these actions take on them.

**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.**

**Table 1**  
**2009-10 SNC EXPENDITURES AND ENCUMBRANCES**  
As of June 30, 2010

<b>State Operations</b>				
<i>Personal Services</i>	<i>Budgeted</i>	<i>Expended</i>	<i>Balance</i>	<i>% Spent</i>
SALARIES AND WAGES	1,641,967	1,487,747	154,220	91%
SALARY SAVINGS (3%)	(39,729)		(39,961)	
STAFF BENEFITS	436,749	468,114	31,365	107%
<b>Personal Services, Totals</b> <i>This figure reflects a reduction for 3 furlough days</i>	<b>2,038,988</b>	<b>1,955,860</b>	<b>83,128</b>	<b>96%</b>
<i>Operating Expenses and Equipment</i>	<i>Budgeted</i>	<i>Expended</i>	<i>Balance</i>	<i>% Spent</i>
GENERAL EXPENSE	271,771	171,628	100,143	63%
TRAVEL - IS	100,000	64,009	35,991	64%
TRAVEL - OS	2,612	0	2,612	0%
TRAINING	30,000	8,645	21,355	29%
FACILITIES	257,181	335,240	78,059	130%
UTILITIES	10,411	9,734	677	93%
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY	67,265	60,350	6,915	90%
CONTRACTS - EXTERNAL	428,046	507,191	79,145	118%
CONTRACTS - INTERAGENCY AGREEMENT	875,270	796,469	78,801	91%
CONSOLIDATED DATA CENTER	-	0	0	0%
EQUIPMENT	-	0	0	0%
OTHER ITEMS OF EXPENSE	25,904	16,202	9,702	63%
PRO RATA (control agency costs)	182,562	182,562	0	100%
PROP 84 ADMIN SUPPORT	169,145	0	169,145	0%
<b>Operating Expenses &amp; Equipment, Totals</b>	<b>2,420,167</b>	<b>2,152,030</b>	<b>268,137</b>	<b>89%</b>
<b>State Operations, Totals</b>	<b>4,459,155</b>	<b>4,107,890</b>	<b>351,265</b>	<b>92%</b>
<b>Local Assistance, Totals</b>	<b>15,448,000</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>15,448,000</b>	<b>0%</b>
<b>SNC EXPENDITURES, TOTALS</b>	<b>19,907,155</b>	<b>4,107,890</b>	<b>15,799,265</b>	<b>21%</b>

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## **Background**

Over a year ago, the Department of Finance froze payments on Proposition 84 grants as a means of preserving operating capital in the face of the State's on-going fiscal crisis. Since then, bond sales have generated enough funding to: 1) allow the SNC to restart and fully fund frozen projects; 2) conditionally authorize – subject to the availability of future bond funds – 14 high-ranked FY 2008-09 Competitive Grant applications in December 2009; and 3) launch a new round of Proposition 84 grant application solicitations for FY 2010-11.

## **Current Status**

### **Proposition 84**

Good news first – we launched our new Proposition 84 Grant Program on July 14, 2010. To help get the word out, we posted the FY 2010-11 Grant Guidelines and Grant Application Packets on our Web site, sent an email notification to our external outreach lists and started scheduling presentations to various stakeholder groups throughout the Region. The application deadline for this, our only round for this fiscal year, is September 13, 2010, and SNC staff expects to have recommendations for Board review and approval at our March 2011 meeting.

Based on the expenditure schedule previously approved by the Board, the FY 2010-11 Grant Program will authorize \$10 million of the approximately \$20 million remaining in Proposition 84 grant funds. This will leave approximately \$10 million for future fiscal year awards.

SNC Grants Administration and Program staff are organizing an educational webinar for prospective applicants in early August to review and answer questions about this year's application materials and process. In addition, Grants and Program staff continue to provide guidance to individual stakeholders regarding how to submit the most complete, competitive applications possible.

In order to get to final recommendations for consideration at the March 2011 meeting, the SNC will be scheduling Subregional Subcommittee calls in mid-January to review staff recommendations. We will be contacting Subregional Subcommittee members in the coming weeks to schedule these meetings.

In the meantime, SNC Program and Grants Administration staff continue to manage existing grant projects, including expediting invoices on active grants and closing out projects that have completed their work. While we have funds available for the 14 projects conditionally authorized in December 2009, these projects have not yet gone through the ministerial process of being added to the approved list by the State Treasurer's Office. Grantees are allowed to move ahead with their projects if they can, but we are not yet able to reimburse them for expenses incurred. We continue to work

with the Natural Resources Agency and the State Treasurer's Office to get these projects on the approved list as quickly as possible so that they are eligible for reimbursement.

As of July 16, 2010, we've closed out eight more projects, bringing the total number of completed projects in the Region to 31, for a total of almost \$8 million.

### Water Bond

In terms of potential new funding beyond Proposition 84, the only major source on the horizon is Proposition 18, the \$11.1 billion California Water Bond (Safe, Clean and Reliable Drinking Water Supply Act of 2010), which, if passed by the voters, would provide the SNC with \$75 million for local support of eligible projects. Due to the ongoing budget crisis and concern about taking on substantial new debt, Governor Schwarzenegger called on lawmakers to remove the water bond from the November 2010 ballot and reschedule it for voter consideration in November 2012.

As of the writing of this report, the Legislature had not taken action on the Governor's request, although many lawmakers have indicated individual support. If the water bond is successful but does not appear on the ballot until November 2012, new funds would likely not be available for granting until late 2013. Since the SNC is scheduled to fully expend its remaining Proposition 84 allocation by 2012, the SNC could find its Grant Program unfunded for a year or more. In light of this possibility, SNC staff is exploring the potential for alternatives to the expenditure of the remaining \$10 million. Once we have more information about the timing of the water bond, we may bring forward a more specific recommendation for the Board's consideration.

### Audit

The Department of Finance audit of the SNC Proposition 84 Grant Program is still in process. Auditors have reviewed our procedures and documentation and are now identifying a subset of grantees for specific site visits. We have communicated with all our grantees letting them know that they may be visited by the audit team, and we will be contacting and coordinating directly with those actually chosen for a visit. Once the audit team members have completed grantee site visits, they will produce a draft report outlining their findings. We expect to see this report in early October. The SNC has 10 days to respond to any findings listed in the report. Our responses will then be added to a final report, which will likely be published sometime before the end of the calendar year. Staff will provide additional updates and reports to the Board as they become available.

### Next Steps

At our last meeting, the Chair named a two-member Subcommittee to work with staff on developing more effective decision-making tools for the Board's use in future grant project review and decision-making. The Grants Administration staff has scheduled and will be meeting with this Subcommittee in the coming months to continue developing this new tool.

**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.**

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## Background

The North Central Subregion of the SNC includes all of Plumas and Sierra Counties and the eastern portions of Butte and Tehama Counties. The Subregion is served by two Project Leads from the Mt. Lassen Area staff, one in Susanville California and one located in the Auburn Regional office. Other Mt. Lassen Staff and the Mt. Lassen Area Manager also provide assistance and information on SNC programs to the Boards of Supervisors, Federal Agencies and nonprofit Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in The Region who are eligible or interested in Grants and Initiatives of the SNC.

To this date, this Subregion has been very successful in obtaining grants and grant dollars, with Sierra County leading the way. A total of **37 grants** have been awarded in this Subregion amounting to **\$9,006,619**. It should be noted that a large percentage of these dollars has been for acquisition of land or conservation easements in the area.

The North Central Subregion is primarily rural in nature with small communities dotting the area throughout the Sierra alpine Region. Total population within the SNC boundary is approximately 105,000. All of Sierra and Plumas counties are within the SNC boundary; portions of Tehama (37%) and Butte (60%) are within the boundary. The primary population centers are located in the valley areas of Butte and Tehama counties, outside of the Conservancy boundary. The land area within the Conservancy boundary is primarily in public ownership, the majority of which is managed by the US Forest Service within three National Forests; the Tahoe National Forest, the Plumas National Forests, and the Lassen National Forests. The largest Sierra alpine valley lies within Sierra County – Sierra Valley. Sierra Valley is one of the largest areas of privately owned agriculturally based working landscapes within this Subregion.

Dramatically beautiful in its diversity, the Subregion goes from peaks of over 8,000 feet to valley and foothills. It is home to the Feather River Watershed, the largest contributing watershed feeding the State Water Project. The beauty of the Lakes Basin/Sierra Buttes area has been a long-standing draw for recreational pursuits for many Californians each year. In addition, the Feather River system produces a significant amount of electricity through a complex series of hydro-electric generation facilities.

## Current Status

The role of National Forests in producing logs to local mills and the role these facilities play in local economies is at the heart of the discussion that has escalated in recent years in the North Central Subregion. The closure of mills in Loyalton and Quincy last year clearly defined how significant the forest resources are and the impact these

operations have on local economies. Recent large destructive fires on the forests that destroyed natural resources and habitat and negatively impacted air and water quality have underscored the importance of restoring forest health in the area.

### Fuels and Fire Management

The North Central Subregion contains a significant amount of forest land, both public and private. Much of this forest is overly dense, and vulnerable to catastrophic wildfire. Most of the subregion is classified as “high” or “very high” fire threat by CALFire’s Fire and Resource Assessment Project (FRAP). The western edge of the forest land in Butte County and most of the Tehama County forest land is classified as “very high” fire threat. Large, damaging fires have become an expectation in the Subregion. Fire occurrence in Plumas and Sierra Counties has also been high with large acreages of forested lands lost.

Recovery from these fires, as well as prevention of future fires, is a major agenda item in the Subregion for both local governments and the US Forest Service.

Implementation of defensible space around homes has been emphasized by County Fire Safe Councils, the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CALFire) and the federal agencies that administer lands within the subregion. SNC has funded projects with the Butte County Fire Safe Council, the Plumas County Fire Safe Council and the Feather River Coordinated Resource Management (CRM) to address many of these issues.

### Watershed Protection

The North Central Subregion is a major water supplier for California, containing the entire Feather River watershed, the Mill-Big Chico watershed, a portion of the Cow-Battle watershed, and the Upper Yuba flowing into Yuba County in the Central Subregion. The Feather River is captured by Oroville Dam, the second largest reservoir in California. The ability of the watershed to capture and retain rain and snowfall for slow release into the reservoirs and rivers is critical to a reliable water supply and management. Catastrophic wildfire, loss of wetlands, and stream bank erosion negatively impact the watershed in this regard.

The California Department of Water Resources (DWR) has listed these priorities in their 2009 California Water Plan update include:

- Working with IRWMPs to make water regions more self-sufficient and reduce water transfers;
- Increase public awareness of the Sierra Nevada Region to the state’s water supply;
- Restore meadows and increase water storage; and

- Ecosystem health and water reliability are co-equal.

SNC has funded projects with Plumas Corp in Plumas County, the Feather River CRM and private landowners to address these issues.

### Working Landscapes

Cattle grazing and haying are major economic activities in Sierra Valley. Grazing is also significant in the western foothills and mountains in Tehama, and to a lesser extent, Butte Counties. Most of the grazed land in the foothills is in Williamson Act contracts. The future of Williamson Act funding is of great concern to these landowners. Due to the state's fiscal crisis, the total state budget for Williamson Act subvention payments was reduced to a token \$1,000 for each of the past two years. Counties are making difficult choices to continue funding Williamson Act subventions without reimbursement from the state.

Efforts towards retaining the economic viability of the working landscapes in the subregion also include an increased interest in conservation easements. Landowners of a large portion of the land in Sierra Valley have, or are seeking, to protect these working landscapes through conservation easements. The SNC has been active in providing funding support for many of these easements.

### Recreation and Tourism

Recreation and tourism is significant to the economies of the North Central Subregion counties, particularly Plumas, where related employment provides for 11% of the county's workforce. However, growth in this segment of the economy has been slower than the overall economy in the past decade. Travel and tourism spending in Plumas County was \$107 million in 2007, but only grew 4% in the period from 1995. Sierra County travel and tourism spending exhibited a 13% growth over the same time to \$19 million in 2007. Butte and Tehama Counties had more robust growth (about 25%), but since much of those counties are outside the region and the data is only available at the county level, it is impossible to know exactly how that relates to the Sierra Nevada region. But it should be noted that travel and tourism spending in Butte County for 2007 was \$266 million, and the Oroville Recreation Area is within the SNC boundary.

### Next Steps

The North Central Subregion has demonstrated strong support for SNC initiatives and programs, including Sierra Nevada Forest and Communities Initiative (SNFCI) and Geotourism. SNC staff continues to monitor local issues and regularly attends meetings of collaborative groups and stakeholders. Future outreach efforts in the Subregion will

include specific information about the SNC grants program, SNFCI, and workshops to solicit nominations of Geotourism assets.

**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**

At the December 2008 Board meeting, the SNC Board approved a grant for a project titled "The Great Sierra River Cleanup". This project aimed to expand upon the efforts of the California Coastal Cleanup Day by coordinating cleanups in watersheds throughout the Sierra Nevada Region. The December bond freeze placed considerable pressure on the project's timeline leading staff to recommend sponsoring the Great Sierra River Cleanup in-house.

In May of 2009, SNC contracted with Community Action Partners to implement the inaugural year of the Great Sierra River Cleanup. For the 2009 event, 33 organizations hosted cleanups in 20 Sierra Nevada counties. More than 3,500 volunteers participated and over 130 tons of trash was removed from rivers up and down the Sierra Nevada. Assemblymen Jim Nielsen and Ted Gaines joined cleanups in their districts to show support for their local volunteers and to show their commitment to good stewardship of the watershed.

Planning and coordination for this year's event, scheduled for September 25<sup>th</sup>, is being managed by SNC staff member Brittany Juergenson.

### **Current Status**

At this time there are 65 groups planning to participate in Cleanup efforts in all 22 counties in the Sierra Nevada and the number of volunteers participating this year is expected to increase considerably. Six legislators have pledged their support for the event by becoming honorary co-chairs and will work to promote the event to their constituents through their newsletters, web sites, and social media sites. This includes Senator Dave Cogdill and Assembly Members Jim Nielsen, Ted Gains, Connie Conway Tom Berryhill and Dan Logue. Interested volunteers are now able to register for the 2010 Great Sierra River Cleanup by visiting the Cleanup location map on SNC's Web site. The map may be used to locate local cleanup events and then pre-register with the local cleanup organization using the contact information provided.

Sponsors for the 2010 Great Sierra River Cleanup include The Pacific Forest and Watershed Lands Stewardship Council, The California Ski Industry Association, The California Forestry Association, Sierra Pacific Foundation, the California Coastal Commission, and the Houston Group. The event is also supported by a variety of in kind support from CalTrans, Waste Management, Inc., Whole Foods, Nature's Path, and Crystal Geysers.

**Next Steps**

Staff will continue to coordinate with cleanup groups to promote the September 25<sup>th</sup> event and recruit volunteers. Outreach will be made to both local and larger regional media outlets and efforts to secure sponsorship for the 2011 Great Sierra River Cleanup will continue.

**Recommendation**

**This is an informational item only; no formal action is needed by the Board at this time, although Boardmembers are encouraged to sign up and participate in one of the Cleanups.**

**Background**

Beginning in 2007, the SNC began hosting conferences each year on a major topic of interest to the Sierra Nevada. The first conference invited climate change experts from the academic, agency, business and nonprofit fields to inform participants about the anticipated impacts, implications and potential solutions for addressing climate change in the Sierra. The following year we co-sponsored a conference on Regional sustainability with the Sierra Business Council. And last year we hosted a web-based “Connecting the Dots” symposium, also known as a “webposium,” to discuss ways to improve watershed/forest resiliency and community health by reducing the threat of wildfire while sustainably using forest “fuels” to create local jobs and economic resilience.

**Current Status**

Given the level of staff involvement needed for the launch of the Sierra Nevada Forest and Community Initiative and the new FY 2010-11 Proposition 84 Grant Program, as well as the other major initiatives already underway around the Region, we do not believe we have the capacity to support development of a successful annual conference or symposium this year.

**Recommendation**

**The Staff recommendation is the SNC not host an annual conference or symposium this year, and that the Board and staff revisit the issue for next year.**

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## **Background**

Over the past few years, Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) staff has had numerous discussions with a wide range of partners and stakeholders on how best to address issues related to forest health, wildfire and sustainable communities. It has been clear that the relationship between these issues present a unique opportunity for the SNC to assist the Region in addressing these matters in an integrated manner, affecting a number of our program areas.

At the March Board meeting the SNC's Governing Board reviewed a draft description of a proposed Initiative and Resolution and directed staff to solicit public comment, make appropriate changes, and bring the matter back to the Board at the June meeting. In addition to ongoing conversations with a variety of stakeholders, during the month of April the SNC received 63 comments addressing the initiative and resolution. At their June meeting, the Board unanimously approved the Sierra Nevada Forest and Community Resolution. The Resolution was modified considerably based on public comment and had support from a wide array of organizations and individuals.

Through the Sierra Nevada Forest and Community Initiative (SNFCI), the SNC is fostering collaboration locally and Regionally in an effort to support a cohesive, economically viable, and sustainable approach to reducing fire risk, creating jobs, and protecting our valuable forest and watershed resources. SNFCI has strong coordination with federal agencies, particularly the US Forest Service, as they manage a significant portion of the land in the Sierra Nevada Region, and the SNFCI compliments their parallel efforts to manage the forest landscape in a more holistic manner with ecological restoration as the focus and collaborating with the local communities. Staff is also working very closely with Bureau of Land Management and the National Park Service to identify common goals and ways to formally involve the agencies in the Initiative.

Based on discussions with key stakeholders and feedback from local forest collaboratives, the SNC is working to form a Regional coordinating council to work on the statewide and national issues that will impact the success of these efforts. A SNFCI Coordinating Council is being created consisting of local governments, tribal entities, representatives from the environmental/conservation community, the wood products industry, fire safe councils and other key parties. The Council will work closely with appropriate federal and state agencies to ensure a coordinated approach. The primary focus of the council is policy, investment, emerging technology, and science and research. The first charge of the Council will be the creation of an implementation plan. The Plan will establish measurable outcomes for the Initiative and identify a process for monitoring success. By identifying needs and opportunities, the Plan will assist in strategic investment in the Region.

Boardmember Nunes and former Board Vice-Chair Wilensky have agreed to co-chair the Coordinating Council and Boardmember

Kirkwood will serve with Nunes as the Board liaisons to the initiative. Staff is currently working with these individuals to identify membership of the Council to ensure that the necessary parties are represented in order for the effort to be successful.

One critical SNFCI element is SNC support for local efforts aimed at convening diverse stakeholders to identify common visions and strategies that result in ecologically healthy forests, fire-safe communities, local job creation, and retaining existing industrial and commercial infrastructure and fostering new infrastructure as needed. On-the-ground manifestations of the SNFCI include local collaborative groups such as the Amador-Calaveras Consensus Group (ACCG) and the Sustainable Forests and Communities Collaborative (SFCC), and groups formed to address more specific projects such as fuels reduction project design. Some of these groups are largely supported by SNC staff in terms of meeting logistics, facilitation, and development efforts.

### **Current Status**

SNC staff is in the process of garnering formal endorsements from stakeholders throughout the Sierra through proactive presentations and outreach. Since June, SNC staff has provided almost twenty presentations to a variety of groups, including County Boards of Supervisors, Integrated Regional Water Management Plan Groups, and Resource Conservation Districts, and an additional ten additional presentations have been scheduled in the next few weeks. Numerous other conversations are being with stakeholders to solicit endorsements. At this early point in outreach efforts, a total of forty organizations, agencies and individuals have signed on to endorse the resolution. This group includes six counties, as well as key stakeholders such as Sierra Forest Legacy, California Forestry Association, Sierra Forest Products and Sierra Business Council. In addition, a specific outreach plan has been developed for tribes that integrate the efforts of several key partners in tribal communication in the Sierra Nevada. An interactive webpage has also been developed allowing partners to easily endorse the resolution.

To begin developing a Regional strategy that can help ensure a balance of appropriately scaled lumber mills, biomass to energy facilities and small wood manufacturing, staff is assessing the available supply of woody biomass and developing an inventory of existing facilities and their volume capacities. This will help target SNFCI efforts toward areas of greatest need. Staff continues to network with established groups with common goals to involve them in the initiative and evaluate specific support SNC may be able to offer them.

Through the efforts of a development consultant hired by SNC to support the local collaboratives, a USDA Rural Development grant has been awarded to promote the establishment of small biomass processing businesses in targeted low-income areas of the Sierra Nevada Region, creating a diverse and stable market for the utilization of woody biomass which will create jobs, stimulate rural economies in low-income areas, and increase the economic feasibility of sustainable fuels reduction efforts which are needed for fire safety and forest health. In addition, two local collaboratives have each

been awarded grants from the National Forest Foundation to provide capacity building support to sustain the organizations for the long term.

### **Next Steps**

Staff will continue working with Co-chairs Wilensky and Nunes and Boardmember Kirkwood to assemble and launch the Regional coordinating council, which will establish short and long-term goals as well as draft an implementation plan with measureable outcomes. Staff will also continue to upgrade the SNFCI webpage with more photos, graphics and general information, and print our SNFCI brochure and other relevant informational materials.

Staff will identify ways to best engage federal land management agencies with SNFCI, recognizing that these agencies are ultimately responsible for management decisions on these public lands. USFS, BLM and NPS have assigned liaisons to the effort who will be interacting at the Regional level. The appropriate agencies are active in the local collaboratives as well.

Each SNC area staff member will be actively involved in the SNFCI outreach effort, providing presentations to groups, with a goal of adding all interested stakeholder as signatories to the SNFCI resolution. As appropriate, additional resources will be focused on such items as support for market analysis/biomass utilization, business plan development and support for the coordinating council. Additional opportunities will be actively sought to submit applications for funding to support both local and regional SNFCI activities.

Through logistical support, facilitation and general guidance, SNC staff will continue to encourage local collaboratives to move continually towards on the ground projects with quantifiable results. Staff will also look for additional opportunities to support local efforts in new areas of the Sierra Nevada.

### **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.**

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## **Background**

The Board has been provided updates at each of their meetings over the past year regarding the prospect of developing an agreement with the Pacific Forest and Watershed Lands Stewardship Council (Stewardship Council) to perform ongoing services to support implementation of their Land Conservation Plan. Pursuant to the plan, individuals and entities that receive fee title, easements, and covenants donated by the Stewardship Council may need assistance in some form or specific other services, which are proposed to be provided by the SNC. The proposed roles to be performed by the SNC are described in this report and the specific parameters for agreement language are included in the attached Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).

At the September, 2009 meeting, the Chair appointed Boardmembers McQuiston and Brissenden to serve as a Board Committee to guide staff on this matter. The subcommittee members have been briefed on the current status and have discussed this with staff prior to this meeting.

## **Current Status**

The five roles listed below have been developed after extensive consultation with the Stewardship Council staff, SNC staff, and the California Attorney General's office. An overarching tenet that has been stressed throughout negotiations is the need to make clear the understanding that SNC's ability to perform any services for the Stewardship Council must be contingent upon the Conservancy receiving and being able to expend adequate financing from the Stewardship Council. The SNC will use an appropriate budgetary mechanism that would only allow the Stewardship Council funds to be used for purposes, specified in the proposed MOU and any subsequent agreements addressing specific properties. The proposed activities for the Conservancy may also require the approval of state "control" agencies.

A sixth role, related to long term monitoring and described in more detail in "Next Steps," is still being discussed and may be brought back to the Board for consideration.

**ROLE 1: Covenantee on US Forest Service (USFS) Lands Received from PG&E.** This role is defined as the acceptance of conservation covenants on lands to be donated to the USFS to ensure protection of the beneficial public values set forth in the court stipulated agreement. The role of Covenant Holder and the monitoring of lands conveyed to the USFS by PG&E is a top priority of the Stewardship Council and of great interest to the US Forest Service. Based on the Conservancy's relationships with the Federal agencies that manage lands within the SNC

boundaries, the Conservancy appears to be the most favorable candidate for taking on this role.

**ROLE 2: Approve successor fee title holders as necessary.** In the event that a recipient entity of fee title land ceases to exist or finds it necessary to transfer title of donated lands, the SNC will play the role of approving a successor title holder.

**ROLE 3: Approve successor conservation easement holders in the event it becomes necessary.** In the event that a recipient entity of a conservation easement ceases to exist or finds it necessary to transfer title of donated easement, the SNC will play the role of approving a successor easement holder.

**ROLE 4: Serve as temporary back-up holder of conservation easements, at the SNC's discretion, when necessary, until SNC identifies new conservation easement holder(s).** In the event that a recipient entity of a conservation easement ceases to exist or finds it necessary to transfer the conservation easement on donated lands from PG&E, and no immediate successor can be located, the SNC would, at its discretion, receive an executory interest in order to hold and manage the easement until a successor can be approved and transfer of the easement can be effectuated. SNC's acceptance of such role would be conditioned on availability of adequate funding to perform the duties required.

**ROLE 5: Review and, at the SNC's discretion, make comments and recommendations on proposed changes to conservation easements.** In the event that a conservation easement holder desires to alter or modify the language of the original easement, the SNC may, at its discretion, make comments and recommendations to the easement holder.

The attached MOU to this staff report ([Attachment 1](#)) includes agreed-upon concepts that may be used to develop subsequent agreements between the Stewardship Council, recipients of donated Stewardship Council lands, easements, and covenants and the SNC. The MOU itself does not create binding legal obligations for the Conservancy. Rather it serves as the basis for future negotiations concerning specific parcels and related funding.

### **Next Steps**

Assuming the SNC Board acts to adopt the staff recommendation and authorizes the Executive Officer to execute the attached MOU in substantially the form presented, and assuming the Board of the Stewardship Council takes similar action, the executed MOU will serve as the basis for the development of agreements for subsequent individual

transactions. A report of any actions taken under the delegation of authority to the Executive Officer will be reported regularly at future Board meetings.

As mentioned earlier in this staff report, there is one additional role that is being considered for future inclusion in the MOU and future agreements. The role addresses the Stewardship Council's obligation to "Plan to Monitor the Economic and Physical Impacts of Land Conservation Commitment" as identified in the stipulated agreement.

The stipulated agreement pertaining to the settlement of the PG&E Bankruptcy suit requires that the Land Conservation Plan developed by the Stewardship Council, include "a plan to monitor the economic and physical impacts of disposition and implementation of enhancement measures on the applicable management objectives....". The reference to "management objectives" pertains to objectives adopted by the Stewardship Council to preserve and/or enhance the beneficial public values of each individual parcel of watershed lands.

Discussions of this monitoring and SNC's potential role are ongoing. At this point, this role has not been fully defined and staff anticipates more discussion with the Stewardship Council staff regarding the desire to have SNC complete the monitoring report(s). A Commitment on the part of the SNC to undertake this task would be conditioned on availability of adequate funding provided by the Stewardship Council, and would be presented to the SNC Board for authorization.

### **Recommendation**

**Staff recommends that the Board approve the attached MOU and authorize the Executive Officer, in consultation with legal counsel, to execute the attached MOU in substantially the form presented, or with such non-substantive changes as may be needed.**

**Staff further recommends that the Board authorize the Executive Officer to enter into agreement(s) with the Stewardship Council for services to be performed in support of the Pacific Forest and Watershed Lands Stewardship Council Program consistent with the MOU executed pursuant to the authorization contained in this resolution, provided, however, that no agreement shall require the SNC to perform duties unless adequate resources are provided, and such duties would be performed only to the extent of the available resources.**

**Staff further recommends that the Board authorize the Executive Officer to establish an appropriate budgetary mechanism pursuant to the provisions of the State Administrative Manual and approved as necessary by the Department of**

**Finance, to cover fully the costs to perform the duties and administrative responsibilities associated with the MOU executed pursuant to this resolution and any subsequent authorized agreements between the Conservancy and the Stewardship Council.**

**Finally, staff recommends that the Executive Officer report to that Board on an ongoing basis all actions taken under the delegation of authority provided in this resolution.**

## Memorandum of Understanding

### Section 1: Purpose

This Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC), as authorized by the SNC Board on September 2, 2010, and the Pacific Forest and Watershed Lands Stewardship Council (Stewardship Council), as authorized on \_\_\_\_\_, is intended to provide guidance to the parties for future negotiations for the development of certain future agreements between the SNC and the Stewardship Council, wherein the scope of work and the compensation to be provided for duties performed by the SNC is clearly set forth and meets the requirements of both the Stewardship Council, in its transfer of lands and conservation easements, and the recording of conservation covenants, and the legal requirements applicable to the SNC. Any subsequent agreements developed pursuant to this MOU shall include language consistent with this MOU, and any future written modifications of this MOU executed by the parties.

### Section 2: Background

The Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) and the Stewardship Council have been engaged in discussions over the past three years concerning potential roles for the SNC to play in the long term preservation of public beneficial values on watershed lands subject to the Stewardship Council's actions. This includes lands that will be conveyed to new owners in fee title subject to conservation easements, as well as lands that will remain with PG&E with easements in place.

Both the Stewardship Council and the SNC agree that the primary interest of developing this arrangement is to ensure that the lands in question are and will be managed in the long term to maintain the beneficial public values identified in the Stipulated Agreement. The SNC generally prefers not to receive ownership of fee title or conservation easements on the lands subject to the Stewardship Council's actions, and intends to consider such actions in the future only on an interim basis or under unique circumstances. One such unique circumstance would be as the Covenantee on lands conveyed to the U.S. Forest Service.

### Section 3: Items for Inclusion in Scopes of Work for Individual Agreements

The SNC contemplates agreeing to perform various tasks, including but not limited to those enumerated below, in assisting the Council with addressing long term issues, subject to the terms of future executed agreements and in compliance with all

applicable legal requirements. It is understood that SNC involvement would be contingent upon availability of adequate funding to carry out specified duties and consistent with authority delegated to the Executive Officer by the SNC Governing Board. The SNC and the Stewardship Council recognize two general categories of roles as outlined below, each to be funded separately by the Stewardship Council. These general categories are: (1) Covenantee of USFS lands, and (2) Conservation Easement and Assignment of Property Interests.

**Category 1: Covenantee of Forest Service Lands**

ROLE 1: The SNC would agree to act as Covenantee for lands donated to the US Forest Service, subject to future agreements that specify duties, which may include any or all of the following:

- A. Agreement to act as a Covenantee for lands that are conveyed to United States Forest Service through donation from the Stewardship Council, subject to necessary funding being provided by the Stewardship Council. As a Covenantee, the SNC anticipates that it would be responsible for the monitoring of donated lands per the Covenants and Conditions set out in the USFS Conservation Covenant to ensure that the USFS management of these lands is consistent with management plans and maintaining the beneficial public values enumerated in such conservation covenants.
- B. Monitor and participate as needed to facilitate US Forest Service completion of Forest Resource Management Plan (FSRP) Amendments as necessary to absorb donated lands and acknowledge covenants.
- C. Develop and maintain web-based covenant monitoring.
- D. Prepare a baseline resource conditions report.
- E. Establish monitoring protocols that may include:
  - 1. Coordination with each USFS forest unit that receives donated lands
  - 2. Conducting regular visits
  - 3. Completing physical on-the-ground visits
  - 4. Identifying and establishing GPS locations and photo points
  - 5. Establishing Annual Schedule
  - 6. Reviewing USFS FRMP Amendments
  - 7. Conduct an annual review of USFS Notice of Proposed Actions

**Category 2: Conservation Easements and Assignment of Property Interests**

The SNC would agree to perform the following roles in support of the Stewardship Council implementation of the Land Conservation Plan, subject to the terms and conditions enumerated in future agreements between the Conservancy and the Stewardship Council. These roles would be performed on an as-needed and likely infrequent basis. The duties to be performed would be set forth in future agreements between the Conservancy and the Stewardship Council and other documents, and may include the following:

Role 2: Approve successor fee title holders as necessary. In the event that a recipient entity of fee title land ceases to exist or finds it necessary to transfer title of donated lands, the SNC would agree to provide approval of a successor title holder in accordance with the terms of future agreements between the Conservancy and the Stewardship Council. It is anticipated that recorded deeds would require notification to be delivered to the SNC upon termination or transfer of ownerships.

SNC would not hold fee title to lands as an interim measure, but would consult with exiting fee title holder and other interested parties regarding successor fee title holders and may recommend successors that meet the criteria of the Stewardship Council's requirements as stated in PG&E's Land Conservation Plan and Stipulated Agreement.

Role 3: Approve successor conservation easement holders in the event it becomes necessary. In the event that a recipient entity of a conservation easement ceases to exist or finds it necessary to transfer title of a donated easement, the SNC would agree to provide approval of a successor easement holder upon consultation with the fee title owner and in accordance with the terms of future agreements between the Conservancy and the Stewardship Council.

As and to the extent provided by subsequent agreements and documents, the SNC would have the right to assign or transfer a property interest to another qualified holder and may effect such an assignment or transfer of title by the recording of an Affidavit establishing or affirming that an event or condition has occurred in accordance with specific provisions listed in the recorded easement.

Role 4: Serve as temporary back-up holder of conservation easements, at the SNC's discretion, when necessary, until SNC has identified and approved new conservation easement holder(s). In the event that a recipient entity of a conservation easement ceases to exist or finds it necessary to transfer a conservation easement on donated lands, and no immediate transferee has been selected and agreed to accept the conservation easement, the SNC would hold and manage conservation easement until a transferee successor can be approved.

The parties intend that pursuant to future agreements the Sierra Nevada Conservancy would be deemed the temporary holder of the conservation easement as an “executory interest” until the easement is transferred to a successor.

In such circumstances the SNC would have the right to assign the interest to another qualified holder and may effect a transfer of title by the recording of Affidavit that establishes or affirms that an event or condition has occurred in accordance with specific provisions listed in recorded easement.

The parties intend that SNC would assume the rights and responsibilities of the conservation easement holder until such time as the easement is transferred to another qualifying entity.

Any endowment funds that are associated with the easement will become available to SNC during the time in which it holds the easement for carrying out requirements of the conservation easement holder. In the event there are no such funds, the duties of the SNC would be limited accordingly, pursuant to future agreements between the SNC and the Stewardship Council.

Role 5: Review and, at the SNC’s discretion, make comments and recommendations on proposed changes to conservation easements. In the event that a conservation easement holder desires to alter or modify the language of the original easement, the SNC may, at its discretion, make comments and recommendations to the easement holder. The following items will be considered when reviewing a proposed amendment:

1. If the proposed amendment(s) to a conservation easement would significantly impair the beneficial public values or affect the conservation purposes (“Substantive Amendments”) as defined in the conservation easement agreement.
2. If any amendments which are mandated by federal, state or local law require an amendment (an unlikely event).
3. The SNC may consult with the fee title owner, PG&E, the Stewardship Council if still in existence, neighboring property owners, government officials and others who might have an interest in the property or the conservation easement in determining the validity of the amendment

### SECTION 3: Amendments to MOU.

This MOU between the SNC and the Stewardship Council may be amended in writing as agreed by the parties and subject to the authorization of the governing bodies of each, or consistent with delegated authority. Upon dissolution of the Stewardship Council, the MOU will cease to be in effect, however, the agreements entered into by the parties will survive as indicated by the terms of the agreements.

SECTION 4: Effect of this MOU

This is a non-binding MOU whose purpose is to facilitate further negotiations between the parties in anticipation of possible future binding agreements. This MOU is intended to serve as the basis for additional negotiations and the parties recognize that each party may propose different or additional terms as negotiations proceed.

\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Jim Branham  
Executive Officer,  
Sierra Nevada Conservancy

\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Allene Zanger  
Executive Director,  
Stewardship Council

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### **Background**

The SNC's enabling legislation requires us to report annually to the Legislature and to the Secretary of the Natural Resources Agency regarding "expenditures, land management costs, and administrative costs." The SNC's Annual Report provides this and other information about the SNC's activities and accomplishments to all interested stakeholders.

### **Current Status**

The SNC's draft [Annual Report for 2009-10](#) includes the statutorily required information and much more. The theme of this year's report is *Working Together for a Better Sierra* and highlights the increasing importance of partnerships to the SNC's success in meeting its mission. Specifically, the report addresses a number of initiatives the SNC pursued in 2009-10 where partnerships played a key role, including the Great Sierra River Cleanup, the Sierra Nevada Forest and Community Initiative, Sierra Day in the Capitol, the Sierra Nevada Geotourism Project, SNC sponsorship of conferences and events throughout the Region, the SNC's Funding Team, and the SNC grant program.

As with our first two annual reports, the draft 2009-10 Annual Report is best viewed in an interactive, electronic format—either online or on compact disc. This format provides links to relevant background and other information as well as short video clips of project partners and others describing how they have worked with or been supported by the SNC over the past year.

### **Recommendation**

**Staff recommends the Board provide suggested modifications and authorize staff to produce and distribute a final Annual Report 2009-10.**

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## **Background**

In July 2006, the Board adopted a five-year Strategic Plan (Plan) for the SNC, which was created with input from workshops held with stakeholders throughout the Region and which has served the organization well during its first years in operation. The Plan included a Vision and Guiding Principles for the organization as well as a list of specific actions to be undertaken within each of the SNC's seven statutorily established program areas. The Board approved a revised Plan at its December 2008 meeting. The revised plan did not reflect any major changes to the original plan, but generally brought the Plan up-to-date. With a few exceptions, all of the actions contained in the Plan have been or are being accomplished or have been deemed to be ongoing activities of the SNC and have been built into our day-to-day operations.

In June 2010, the Board endorsed a process for the creation of a new strategic plan (Plan) by September 2011. Once again, the process will involve significant input from stakeholders, beginning with a Board workshop held on June 3<sup>rd</sup> 2010, which was attended by a number of the SNC's key stakeholders from throughout the Region. The primary purpose of the workshop was to brainstorm potential areas of focus for the Plan.

While the SNC's current Plan has a goal associated with each of the SNC's seven statutorily established program areas, the Board will establish areas of focus for the new Plan that cut across program areas. Not only does this approach recognize that the majority of activities being undertaken by the SNC do not fall neatly within one or another program area, it will enable the organization to perform a "strategic assessment" of what other organizations working in the Region are doing within each area of focus, so that the SNC's strategies and actions complement, build from, and support those efforts.

Following the Board workshop, a survey was sent out to SNC stakeholders asking them for input on the potential areas of focus developed in the workshop and on how the SNC has performed relative to its Guiding Principles since their adoption as part of the first Plan. In addition, the SNC provided an opportunity for staff to brainstorm potential areas of focus at an all staff meeting in July.

## **Results of Stakeholder Survey**

As shown in the Survey Report (Attachment A), the survey provided a brief description of the thirteen potential areas of focus that resulted from the Board workshop and asked respondents to provide their input on the importance of including each of them in the Plan. There were 145 responses received; almost half of the respondents were from

nonprofit organizations and about one-fifth were from local government and one-fifth from state or federal government organizations. The remaining respondents represented education institutions, agriculture, or business/economic development. Based on the responses received, the potential areas of focus fell into two groups.

- More than 80% of respondents *agreed* or *strongly agreed* that that eight of the potential areas of focus should be included in the plan: Advocacy and Education about the importance of the Sierra (96%); Investment in the Sierra Nevada (94%); Long-term Effectiveness of the SNC (93%); Healthy Forests and Watersheds (88%); Capacity of Organizations aligned with SNC Mission (87%); Working Landscapes (84%), Building a Regional Identity (83%); and; Sustainable Communities/Smart Growth (81%).
- Fewer than 70% of respondents *agreed* or *strongly agreed* that five of the potential areas of focus should be included in the plan: Geotourism (70%); Renewable Energy (70%); Climate Change (69%); Clearinghouse for Sierra Nevada Information (59%), and; Regional Infrastructure (49%).

When respondents were asked to select their top three potential areas of focus, the results were substantially, although not entirely, similar. As shown in the chart below, seven of the eight potential areas of focus mentioned in the first bullet above topped the list with Renewable Energy nudging Building a Regional Identity into ninth place on the list (tied with Climate Change).

**Potential Areas of Focus Ranked Among the Top Three**

<b>Potential Area of Focus</b>	<b># of Respondents</b>	<b>% of Respondents</b>
Healthy Forests and Watersheds	104	73%
Investment in the Sierra Nevada	61	43%
Working Landscapes	58	40%
Sustainable Communities/Smart Growth	41	28%
Capacity of Organizations aligned with SNC Mission	31	22%
Advocacy and Education	31	21%
Long-term Effectiveness of SNC	20	14%
Renewable Energy	19	13%
Building a Regional Identity	18	12%
Climate Change	17	12%
Geotourism	12	8%
Regional Infrastructure	12	8%
Clearinghouse for Sierra Nevada Information	10	7%

In addition to providing input on the potential areas of focus that resulted from the Board workshop in June, respondents were also asked if they had other thoughts on where the SNC should focus its efforts over the next three to five years. The resulting comments were largely general in nature or provided input on the types of actions we could take within the existing potential areas of focus. However, some input related specifically to the need to protect and restore watersheds, prompting us to consider whether this needed to be a separate area of focus apart from healthy forests.

Finally, the survey asked respondents to provide input on how closely the SNC's actions have aligned with the Guiding Principles adopted as part of the organization's first Strategic Plan. The results were generally quite positive. Of those having an opinion, almost three-quarters or more of the respondents think that the SNC adheres to its Guiding Principles *all the time* or *quite often* in all but three instances:

- The SNC purchases and/or creates incentives for the purchase, where practical, of resources for goods and services within the Sierra Nevada Region. We diligently seek opportunities to improve the economic well-being of communities in the Region (69%).
- The SNC encourages community-based solutions and assists communities with technical expertise, information and resources necessary to achieve local solutions. (67% )
- The SNC informs and educates the public throughout the Region and the State about the important contributions the Sierra Nevada provides to all Californians, including providing clean water for many uses outside the Region. (59%)

In every instance, five percent or less of respondents think that the SNC *never* or *rarely* adheres to its Guiding Principles with the exception of the third bullet above where six percent of respondents think that the SNC *rarely* informs and educates the public about the importance of the Sierra Nevada.

### **Next Steps**

The next steps in the planning process involve gathering more information with regard to potential areas of focus before the Board selects areas of focus for the plan at its meeting in December. This additional information will include a "strategic assessment" of work being done by other organizations in the Region within each potential area of focus, an assessment of potential sources of funding to support activities within each area, and additional input from stakeholders regarding the value the SNC could bring within each area.

Based on the results of the survey, additional input received from stakeholders and staff, and further analyses of the relationships between the potential areas of focus, staff proposes to gather this additional information relative to the following eight potential areas of focus:

- **Healthy Forests**—Foster collaboration locally and regionally in an effort to support a cohesive, economically viable, and sustainable approach to reducing fire risk, creating jobs, and restoring and protecting watershed health consistent with SNC's Sierra Nevada Forest and Community Initiative (SNFCI.)
- **Watershed Protection and Restoration**—Enhance the health of watersheds in the Region by supporting Integrated Regional Water Management, working to address issues that threaten water quality and supply, and promoting projects, methods and tools that help to protect and restore Sierra watersheds.
- **Working Landscapes**—Support the preservation of sustainable ranches, farms, forests and mines in the Region by providing regional perspective and coordination, supporting research and needed infrastructure and continued support for conservation easements.
- **Healthy and Sustainable Communities**—Assist in the development of sustainable communities and smart growth strategies which decrease the ecological footprint, support local economies, consider the need to limit growth in the wildland urban interface (WUI), address the need for broadband and other infrastructure and promote vibrant, safe communities in the Region.
- **Advocacy and Education about the Importance and Benefits of the Sierra Nevada**—Serve as an advocate and promote education of decision-makers, youth, and the public about the importance of the Sierra Nevada and the benefits the Region provides to the entire State, including clean water, biodiversity, opportunities for Geotourism and other ecosystem services.
- **Building a Regional Identity**— Build a Regional identity among those who live and work in the Sierra Nevada to provide a more unified voice for the Region and greater understanding of the Region's needs.
- **Climate Change**—Adopt a Regional approach to climate change integrating, supporting and enhancing existing programs and projects, sharing resources and expertise and maximizing the benefits for the Region as a whole.
- **Long-term Effectiveness of SNC**—Ensure the long term effectiveness of the SNC by securing sustainable sources of funding for our work, continuing to build the credibility of the organization, and continually assessing the effectiveness and efficiency of our operations

While staff are proposing these potential areas of focus because they are more programmatic in nature (with the exception of the last, which is internally focused), the results of the Board workshop, survey and other input suggest that there are several

overriding considerations that must also be addressed in the Plan. First and foremost is funding and the need to bring additional investment into the Region. Second is the need to grow the capacity of organizations working within the Region. Third is the role that the SNC can play as a collaborator and convener in the Region.

Rather than creating separate areas of focus to address these three issues, staff is suggesting that these issues help drive the development of specific strategies and actions within each of the areas of focus selected by the Board in December. Given the SNC's limited resources, this will help the organization more effectively and strategically answer the questions, "Funding for what?"; "Where is capacity needed?", and "Collaboration to what end?" Other overriding considerations that can drive the development of strategies and actions in the same way include the potential for the SNC to serve as a clearinghouse for information and research within an area of focus, the potential need for additional education and outreach related to that area, and the potential need for additional infrastructure to support efforts in that area.

Note that the eight potential areas of focus listed above do not align evenly with the SNC's seven program areas. While one or more of the potential areas of focus clearly tie to resource conservation, preservation of working landscapes, natural disaster risk reduction, water and air quality, and assisting the regional economy, the link to tourism and recreation and use of public lands is less direct. For example, educating the public about recreational opportunities in the Sierra Nevada could be one of the strategies under "Advocacy and Education about the Importance and Benefits of the Region." However, the linkage between preserving working landscapes as a program area and "Working Landscapes" as an area of focus in the plan is clearly more direct.

### **Recommendation**

**Staff recommends that the Board approve the potential Areas of Focus for the Strategic Plan, with the understanding that staff may consider other areas if further outreach suggests the need to do so.**

# SIERRA NEVADA CONSERVANCY



## 2010 Strategic Planning Survey Draft Report

July 9<sup>th</sup> -- July 26<sup>th</sup> 2010

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The purpose of the Strategic Planning Survey was twofold: to elicit feedback on potential Areas of Focus that will be central to the SNC's new Strategic Plan and to get feedback on how well we have been fulfilling our Guiding Principles over the past 5 years. The Survey included 33 questions in these two categories and a short section on Respondent Demographics and Comments.

The survey was sent to 1,262 individuals and several organizations were asked to include information about the survey in their newsletters encouraging their members to take the survey. SNC staff was excluded from the list, as staff was asked for their opinions at a series of face-to-face meetings. The response rate was 11% with 145

Because of the non-random nature of the survey responses and the fact that various stakeholder groups were not equally represented among the responses, this survey should not be interpreted as representative of all of the people who would benefit from the SNC's new Strategic Plan. Nevertheless, the results of this survey give important insight into the needs and expectations of some of the Sierra Region's most active and interested individuals and organizations.

## **KEY FINDINGS**

1. Most Respondents (74%) "Strongly Agreed" that Healthy Forests and Watersheds should be a priority Areas of Focus for the SNC, followed closely by Investment in the Sierra Nevada (68%).
2. Even though it is more of an "internal" focus area, a large number of Respondents (56%) "Strongly Agreed" that Long Term Effectiveness of the SNC should be a priority Area of Focus.
3. Most respondents (34%) "Completely Disagree" or "Somewhat Disagree" that Regional Infrastructure should be a priority Area of Focus for the SNC. Other potential Areas of Focus with high disagreement were Clearinghouse for SN information (23%) , Climate Change (18%), Geotourism (16%) and Renewable Energy (15%).
4. A large number of Respondents had "No Opinion" about whether the SNC had been consistently following its Guiding Principles over the past five years. Of those who did have an opinion, 41% of Respondents said that the Guiding Principle that the SNC had been following "All the Time" was "The SNC respects the mission....of other agencies...."
5. When "No Opinion" responses were excluded from the total, in all but three cases 74% or more of Respondents ranked the SNC's consistency of using the Guiding Principles as "Quite Often" and "All the Time." The three Guiding Principles receiving less than 74% were
  - The SNC purchases...goods and services within the Region (69%)
  - The SNC encourages community-based solutions.....(67%)
  - The SNC informs and educates the public..... (59%)

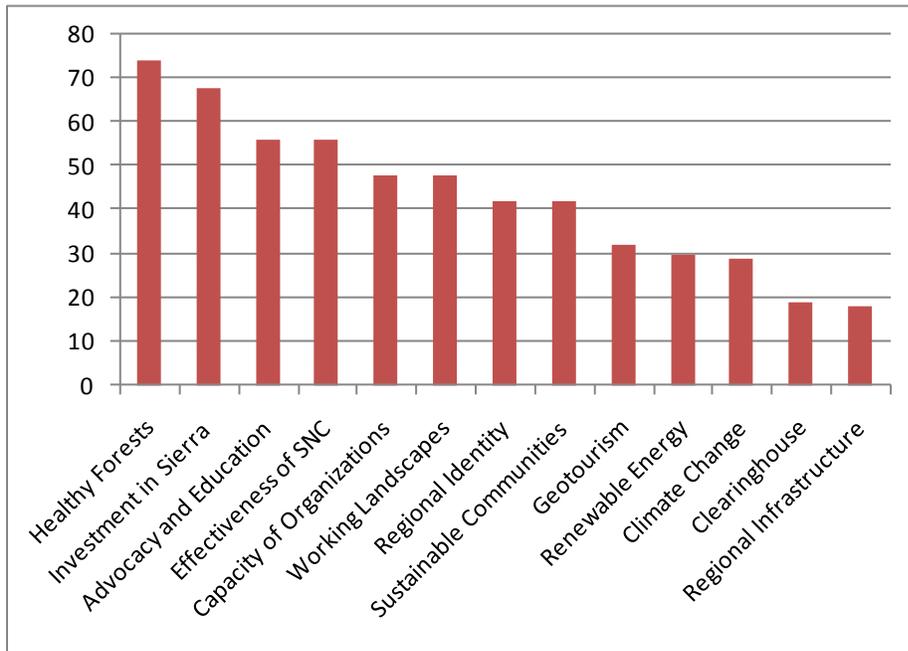
# DETAILED FINDINGS

## Section 1: Areas of Focus

*This section contains responses from Survey Questions 1-15*

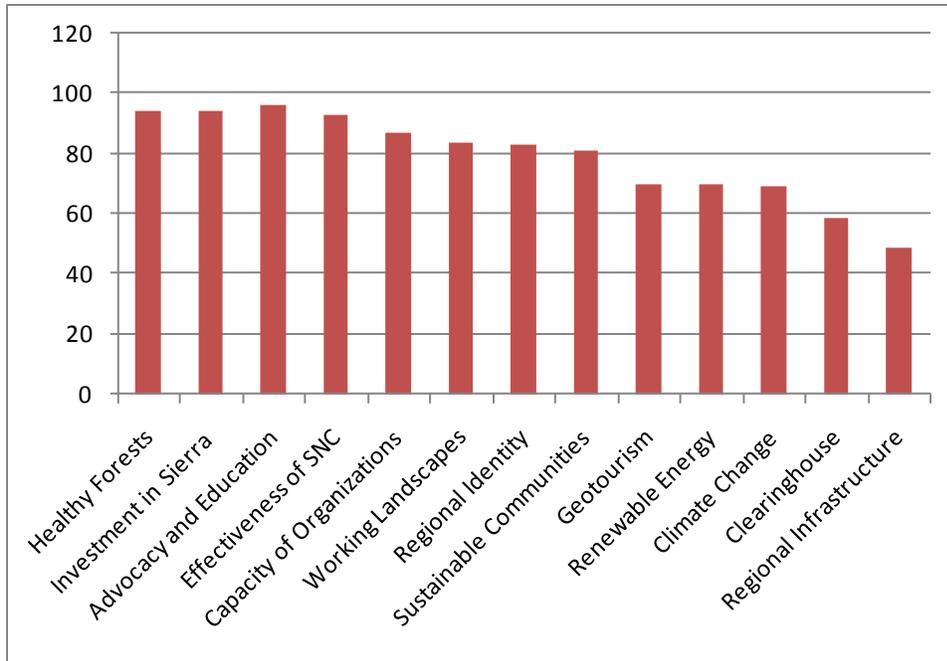
While the SNC's current Plan has a goal associated with each of the SNC's seven statutorily established program areas, staff is recommending that the Board establish Areas of Focus for the new Plan that cut across program areas. At a Board Workshop held in June 2010, 13 potential Areas of Focus were identified that could be strategic priorities for the SNC in the coming years. In order to gauge how Sierra stakeholders valued these potential Areas of Focus, the survey asked respondents how strongly they agreed that these 13 Areas should be SNC priorities on a scale from "Completely Disagree" to "Strongly Agree." Respondents were also encouraged to submit comments about each Area of Focus and finally to choose their "Top Three" priority Areas of Focus from the entire list. (See Comments in Appendix 1)

The following table shows the potential Areas of Focus ranked according to the percentage of Respondents who "Strongly Agreed" that it should be a priority for the SNC.



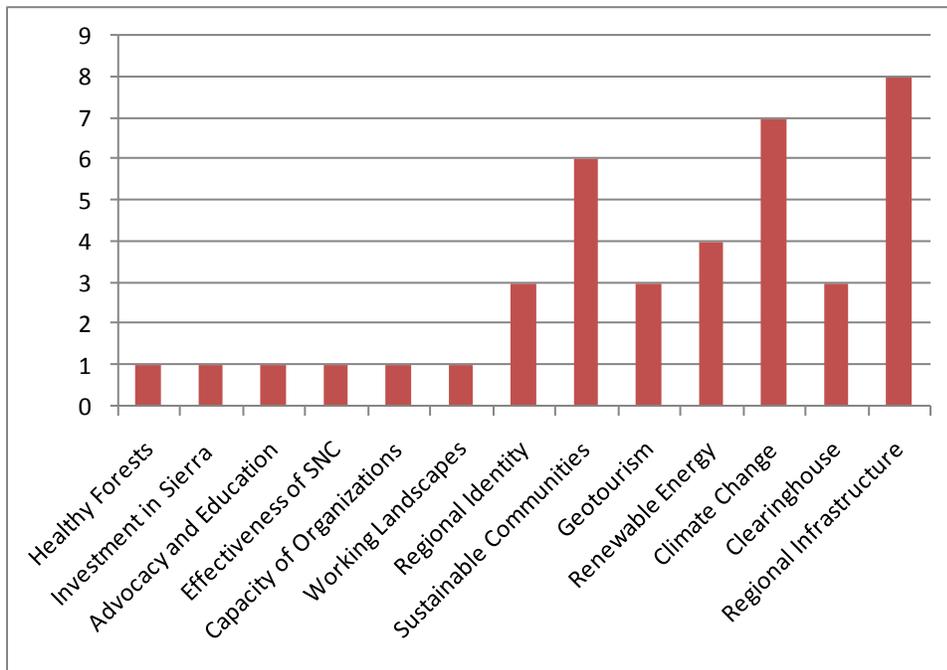
**Table 1: Areas of Focus ranked by percentage of Respondents saying they "Strongly Agree"**

When numbers were combined for Respondents who "Strongly Agree" and "Agree" on priority Areas of Focus for the SNC, the ranking order of the Areas of Focus was virtually identical to the "Strongly Agree" ranking. The only change was that Advocacy and Education scored slightly higher than Healthy Forests and Watersheds and Investment in the Sierra.



**Table 2: Areas of Focus ranked by percentage of Respondents saying they "Strongly Agree" and "Agree"**

When Respondent were asked which Areas of Focus they “Completely Disagree” should be a priority for the SNC, Sustainable Communities, Climate Change and Regional Infrastructure ranked highest as shown in the following table.



**Table 3: Areas of Focus ranked by percentage of Respondents saying they "Completely Disagree"**

When the numbers of responses for “Completely Disagree and “Somewhat Disagree” were combined the ranking changed slightly. Regional Infrastructure, was still the least popular Area of Focus, but Clearinghouse for the Sierra Nevada, Renewable Energy and Geotourism also

appear to be unpopular with Respondents as shown in the following table. However, Sustainable Communities was not so unpopular when the responses were combined.

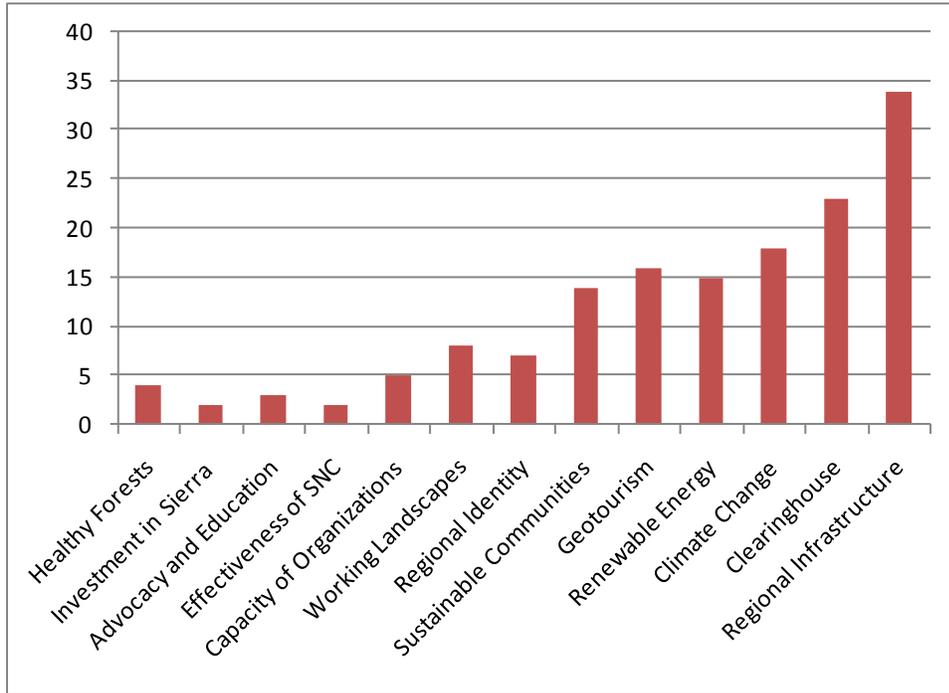
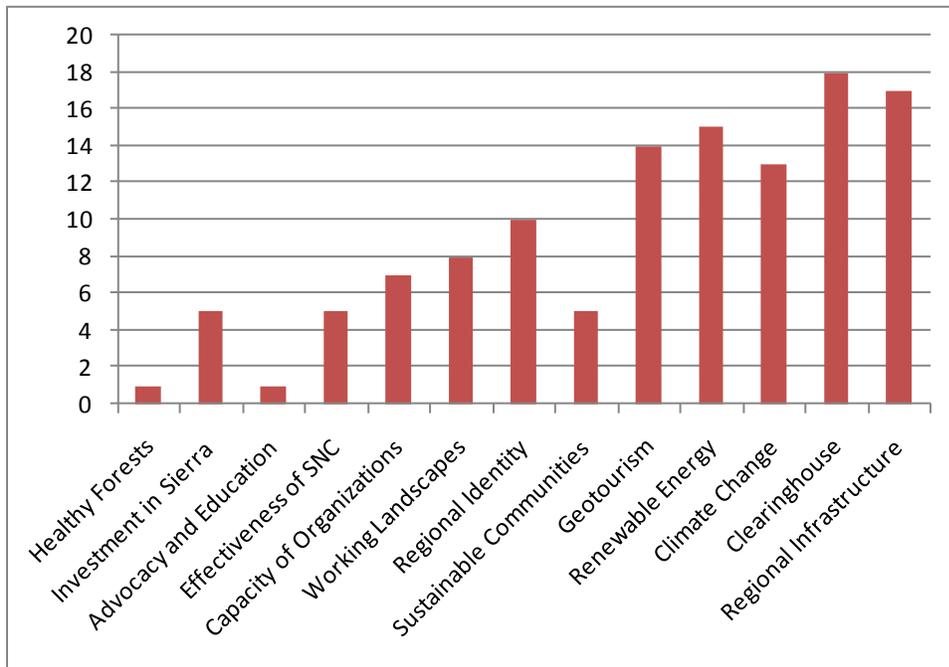


Table 4: Areas of Focus by percentage of Respondents who “Completely Disagree” and “Somewhat Disagree”

Very few Respondents had “No Opinion” about the Areas of Focus Section of the survey. As shown in the Table below, the five Areas of Focus receiving the majority of “No Opinion” rankings were identical with the Areas of Focus that most Respondents felt should NOT be a priority for the SNC as shown in Table 4.

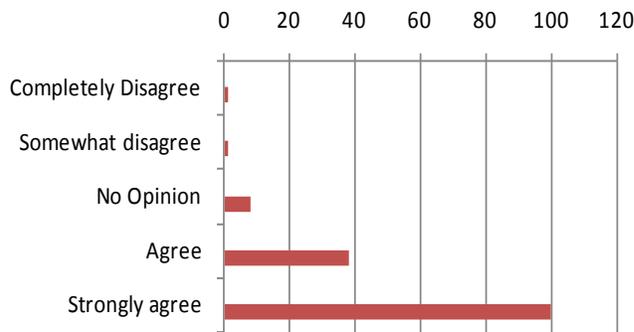


**Table 5: Areas of Focus by percentage of Respondents who had "No Opinion"**

**Responses to individual questions were as follows:**

**Question 1: Investment in the Sierra Nevada:** Support additional investment in the Sierra Nevada for projects consistent with SNC's mission.

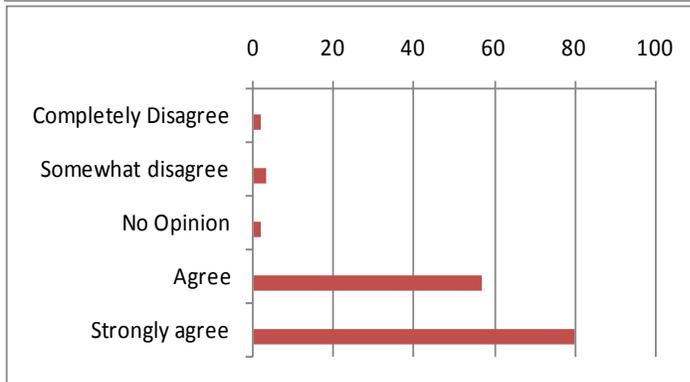
1. INVESTMENT IN THE SIERRA NEVADA: Support additional investment in the Sierra Nevada for projects consistent with SNC's mission.		
Completely Disagree	1	1%
Somewhat disagree	1	1%
No Opinion	8	5%
Agree	38	26%
Strongly agree	100	68%
<b>Total</b>	<b>148</b>	<b>100%</b>



It is hardly surprising that the vast majority of respondents (94%) replied that they either agreed or strongly agreed that the SNC should support additional investment in the region. This Area of Focus was also the second most popular when respondents were asked to choose their TOP THREE Areas of focus.

**Question 2: Advocacy and Education:** Serve as an advocate and promote education about the importance of the Sierra Nevada and the benefits the Region provides to the entire State, including the value of our natural resources and ecosystem services.

<b>2. ADVOCACY AND EDUCATION: Serve as an advocate and promote education about the importance of the Sierra Nevada and the benefits the Region provides to the entire State, including the value of our natural resources and ecosystem services.</b>		
Completely Disagree	2	1%
Somewhat disagree	3	2%
No Opinion	2	1%
Agree	57	40%
Strongly agree	80	56%
<b>Total</b>	<b>144</b>	<b>100%</b>

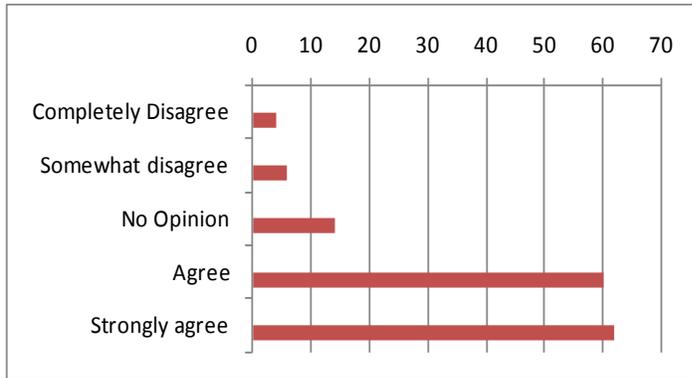


This Area of Focus was the most popular with 96% of respondents replying that they either agreed or strongly agreed that this was an important Areas of Focus for the SNC. Interestingly, when it came to choosing their TOP 3 Areas of Focus, Advocacy and Education came 6<sup>th</sup> in the ranking scoring 21% compared to 73% for the highest scoring Areas of Focus.

**Question 3: REGIONAL IDENTITY:** Build a regional identity among those who live and work in the Sierra Nevada to provide a more unified voice for the Region and greater understanding of the Region’s needs.

**3. REGIONAL IDENTITY: Build a regional identity among those who live and work in the Sierra Nevada to provide a more unified voice for the Region and greater understanding of the Region's needs.**

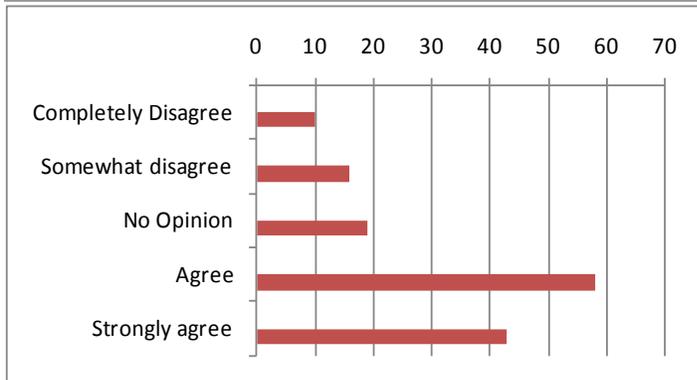
Completely Disagree	4	3%
Somewhat disagree	6	4%
No Opinion	14	10%
Agree	60	41%
Strongly agree	62	42%
<b>Total</b>	<b>146</b>	<b>100%</b>



83% of respondents replied that they either agreed or strongly agreed that this Area of Focus was important putting it in the middle rank of importance to most respondents. On the TOP 3 list it came in 9<sup>th</sup> place (out of 11 places) which was surprisingly low considering how many people had agreed on its importance in this section of the survey. It is also worth noting that this Area of Focus received the most “Agree” votes from Respondents.

**Question 4: CLIMATE CHANGE:** Adopt a Regional approach to climate change integrating, supporting and enhancing existing programs and projects, sharing resources and expertise and maximizing the benefits for the Region as a whole.

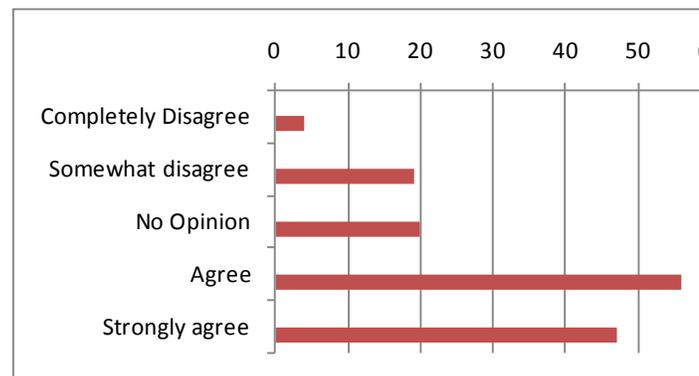
<b>4. CLIMATE CHANGE: Adopt a Regional approach to climate change integrating, supporting and enhancing existing programs and projects, sharing resources and expertise and maximizing the benefits for the Region as a whole.</b>		
Completely Disagree	10	7%
Somewhat disagree	16	11%
No Opinion	19	13%
Agree	58	40%
Strongly agree	43	29%
<b>Total</b>	<b>146</b>	<b>100%</b>



Climate Change was a surprisingly unpopular Area of Focus being the third least popular on the “Strongly Agree” list and gaining the second highest number of Respondents saying they “Completely Disagreed” with this being an SNC priority. IN the TOP 3 it came it tied for 9<sup>th</sup> place out of 11 places.

**Question 5: GEOTOURISM:** Work to expand geotourism within the Sierra Nevada– tourism that enhances the geographic character of the Region, its environment, culture, aesthetics, heritage, and the well-being of its residents.

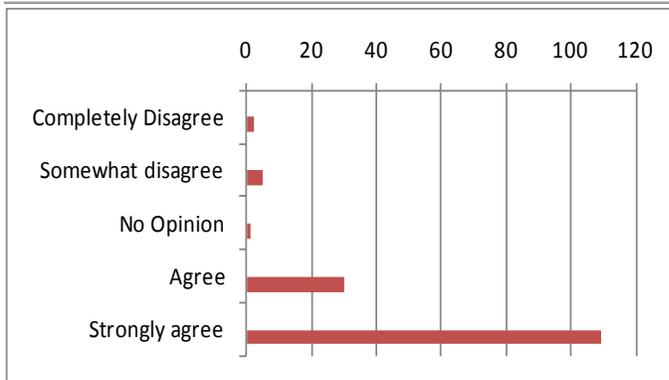
<b>5. GEOTOURISM: Work to expand geotourism within the Sierra Nevada– tourism that enhances the geographic character of the Region, its environment, culture, aesthetics, heritage, and the well-being of its residents.</b>		
Completely Disagree	4	3%
Somewhat disagree	19	13%
No Opinion	20	14%
Agree	56	38%
Strongly agree	47	32%
<b>Total</b>	<b>146</b>	<b>100%</b>



A high percentage of respondents had “No Opinion” about this Area of Focus, presumably because it is a relatively new program. On the TOP 3 list it came in 10<sup>th</sup> place (out of 11 places) and it was the fifth least popular in the “Strongly Agree” list.

**Question 6: HEALTHY FORESTS AND WATERSHEDS:** Protect water quality and increase natural water storage, protect and enhance key habitats, reduce air pollutants and greenhouse gas emissions from large damaging fires and maximize the sequestration of carbon.

6. HEALTHY FORESTS AND WATERSHEDS: Protect water quality and increase natural water storage, protect and enhance key habitats, reduce air pollutants and greenhouse gas emissions from large damaging fires and maximize the sequestration of carbon.		
Completely Disagree	2	1%
Somewhat disagree	5	3%
No Opinion	1	1%
Agree	30	20%
Strongly agree	109	74%
<b>Total</b>	<b>147</b>	<b>100%</b>

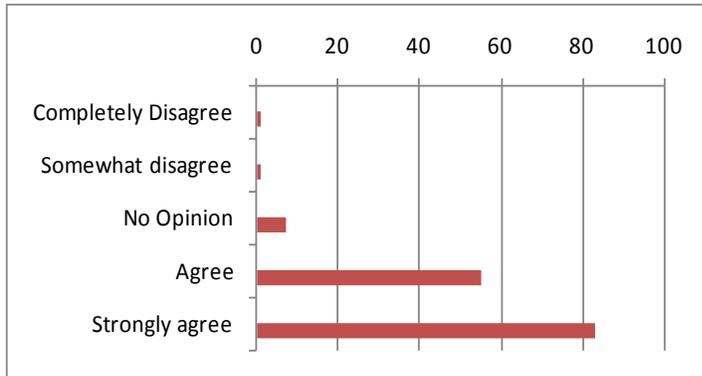


Most respondents (74%) “Strongly Agreed” that this should be a SNC priority Area of Focus making it the top of the “Strongly Agree” list. Only one respondent saying they had “No Opinion” and only one responding that they disagreed that this should be an Area of Focus. It also ranked the highest (by a large margin) in the TOP 3 list with 73% compared to the second placed Investment in the Sierra Nevada which scored 43%.)

**Question 7: LONG TERM EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SNC:** Ensure the long term effectiveness of the SNC by securing sustainable sources of funding for our work, continuing to build the credibility of the organization, and continually assessing the effectiveness and efficiency of our operations.

**7. LONG TERM EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SNC: Ensure the long term effectiveness of the SNC by securing sustainable sources of funding for our work, continuing to build the credibility of the organization, and continually assessing the effectiveness and efficiency of our operations.**

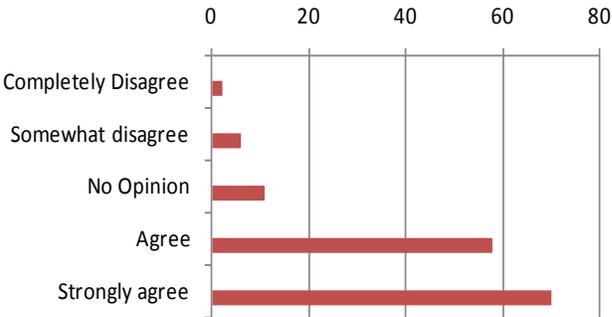
Completely Disagree	1	1%
Somewhat disagree	1	1%
No Opinion	7	5%
Agree	55	37%
Strongly agree	83	56%
<b>Total</b>	<b>147</b>	<b>100%</b>



As this Area of Focus is more “internal” to the operation of the SNC than the other Areas of Focus, it was interesting to see that a high percentage of Respondents (93%) “Agreed” or “Strongly Agreed” that this should be a priority. It was the 4<sup>th</sup> highest scorer in the “Strongly Agree” category, yet when it came to the TOP 3 table, this Area of Focus came in 7<sup>th</sup> place out of 11 places.

**Question 8: CAPACITY OF ORGANIZATIONS ALIGNED WITH SNC’S MISSION:** Support the long-term sustainability of organizations throughout the Region by helping them to diversify financial support, broaden expertise both internally and through partnerships and maintain a strategic focus to maximize and leverage resources.

<b>8. CAPACITY OF ORGANIZATIONS ALIGNED WITH SNC’S MISSION: Support the long-term sustainability of organizations throughout the Region by helping them to diversify financial support, broaden expertise both internally and through partnerships and maintain a strategic focus to maximize and leverage resources.</b>		
Completely Disagree	2	1%
Somewhat disagree	6	4%
No Opinion	11	7%
Agree	58	39%
Strongly agree	70	48%
<b>Total</b>	<b>147</b>	<b>100%</b>

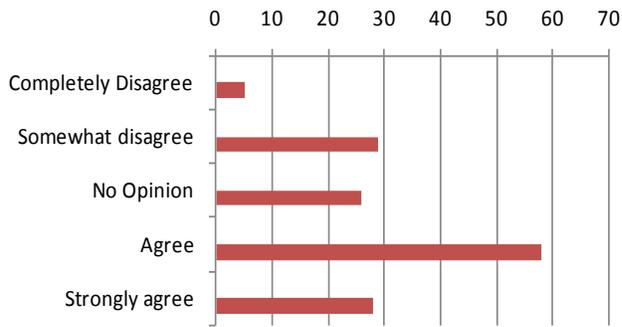


This Area of Focus was fifth rated on the “Strongly Agree” category and 5<sup>th</sup> in the TOP 3 list, the only Area of Focus to score consistently between the two rating methods.

**Question 9: CLEARINGHOUSE FOR THE SIERRA NEVADA:** Become a clearinghouse for “all things Sierra”, including Sierra Nevada information and research.

**9. CLEARINGHOUSE FOR THE SIERRA NEVADA: Become a clearinghouse for “all things Sierra”, including Sierra Nevada information and research.**

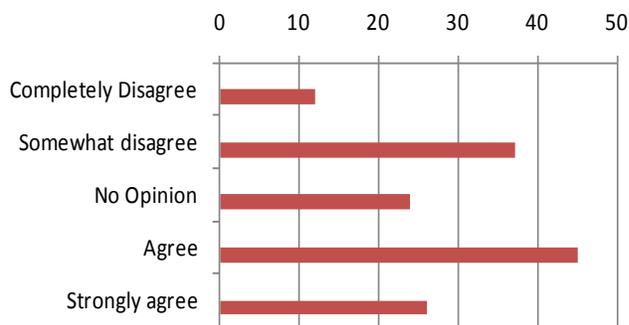
Completely Disagree	5	3%
Somewhat disagree	29	20%
No Opinion	26	18%
Agree	58	40%
Strongly agree	28	19%
<b>Total</b>	<b>146</b>	<b>100%</b>



This Area of Focus was one of the least popular, coming second from the last in the “Strongly Agree” rankings with only 19% of Respondents, and last in the TOP 3 list with only 7% of Respondents choosing it as one of their TOP 3 priorities. It was also top of the “No Opinion” list.

**Question 10: REGIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE:** Build regional infrastructure such as broadband and transportation to boost the Region’s economic competitiveness.

10. REGIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE: Build regional infrastructure such as broadband and transportation to boost the Region’s economic competitiveness.		
Completely Disagree	12	8%
Somewhat disagree	37	26%
No Opinion	24	17%
Agree	45	31%
Strongly agree	26	18%
<b>Total</b>	<b>144</b>	<b>100%</b>

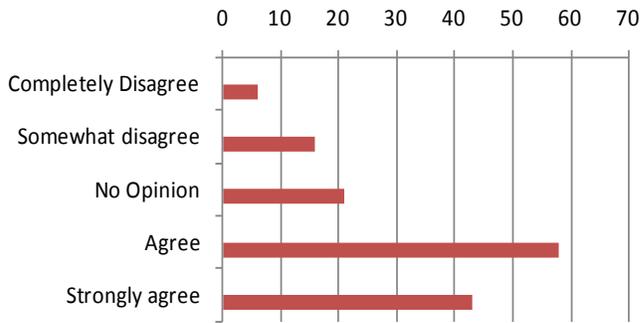


“Regional Infrastructure” was the least popular Area of Focus, scoring lowest in the “Strongly Agree” rankings and highest in the “Completely Disagree” rankings. It came in 10<sup>th</sup> place out of 11 places in the TOP 3 list with only “Clearinghouse for the Sierra Nevada” being ranked lower.

**Question 11: RENEWABLE ENERGY:** Capitalize on opportunities to increase investment in the Sierra Nevada and its communities through the development of renewable energy projects while addressing relevant issues that are cause for concern among stakeholders.

**11. RENEWABLE ENERGY: Capitalize on opportunities to increase investment in the Sierra Nevada and its communities through the development of renewable energy projects while addressing relevant issues that are cause for concern among stakeholders.**

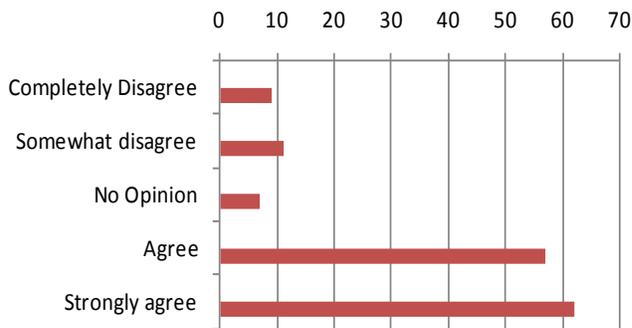
Completely Disagree	6	4%
Somewhat disagree	16	11%
No Opinion	21	15%
Agree	58	40%
Strongly agree	43	30%
<b>Total</b>	<b>144</b>	<b>100%</b>



Renewable Energy placed 4<sup>th</sup> from the bottom in the “Strongly Agree” ranking and 4<sup>th</sup> from the top in the “Completely Disagree” ranking. A high percentage of Respondents (15%) had “No Opinion” about this Area of Focus, the third highest ranking in this category.

**Question 12: SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES and SMART GROWTH:** Assist in the development of sustainable communities and smart growth strategies which decrease the ecological footprint, promote equity, support locally-owned businesses, and promote vibrant, safe communities in the Region.

12. SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES and SMART GROWTH: Assist in the development of sustainable communities and smart growth strategies which decrease the ecological footprint, promote equity, support locally-owned businesses, and promote vibrant, safe communities in the Region.		
Completely Disagree	9	6%
Somewhat disagree	11	8%
No Opinion	7	5%
Agree	57	39%
Strongly agree	62	42%
<b>Total</b>	<b>146</b>	<b>100%</b>

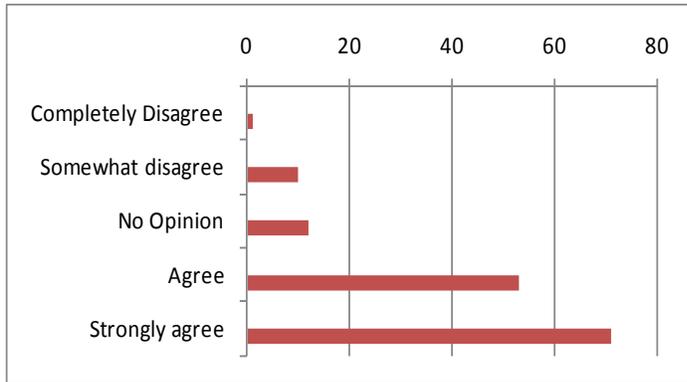


Sustainable Communities was placed firmly in the middle section of “Strongly Agree” ranking, coming in 5<sup>th</sup> out of 10 places and placing highly in the TOP 3 list. Yet it was placed high (3<sup>rd</sup> place) in the “Completely Disagree” rankings. Only 7 Respondents had “No Opinion” about this potential Area of Focus.

**Question 13: WORKING LANDSCAPES:** Support the preservation of sustainable ranches, farms, forests and mines in the Region by providing regional perspective and coordination, supporting research and needed infrastructure and continued support for conservation easements.

**13. WORKING LANDSCAPES: Support the preservation of sustainable ranches, farms, forests and mines in the Region by providing regional perspective and coordination, supporting research and needed infrastructure and continued support for conservation easements.**

Completely Disagree	1	1%
Somewhat disagree	10	7%
No Opinion	12	8%
Agree	53	36%
Strongly agree	71	48%
<b>Total</b>	<b>147</b>	<b>100%</b>



Working Landscapes placed 4<sup>th</sup> highest in the “Strongly Agree” ranking and third highest in the TOP 3 list.

**Question 14: Please choose your TOP THREE priority Areas of Focus from the following list:**

In Question 14, Respondents were asked to choose their TOP THREE priorities from the full list of proposed Areas of Focus. As shown in the following Table, Healthy Watersheds and Forests ranked far higher than any other of the other potential choices. Geotourism, Regional Infrastructure and Clearinghouse for Sierra Nevada Information were clearly far less important Areas of Focus for Respondents, closely followed by Climate Change, Regional Identity, Renewable Energy and Long-Term Effectiveness of the SNC.

<b>14. Please choose your TOP THREE priority Areas of Focus from the following list:</b>			
Healthy Forests and Watersheds	106	73%	1
Investment in the Sierra Nevada	63	43%	2
Working Landscapes	59	40%	3
Sustainable Communities/Smart Growth	41	28%	4
Capacity of Organizations aligned with SNC Mission	32	22%	5
Advocacy and Education	31	21%	6
Long-term Effectiveness of SNC	20	14%	7
Renewable Energy	19	13%	8
Building a Regional Identity	18	12%	9
Climate Change	17	12%	9
Geotourism	12	8%	10
Regional Infrastructure	12	8%	10
Clearinghouse for Sierra Nevada Information	10	7%	11

**Question 15: Do you have any suggestions for additional Areas of Focus that we haven't listed?**

In answer to this question we received 25 responses as follows:

- 1 You guys have done a great job. Keep up the good work. Love the Geotourism idea.
- 2 The SNC should play a leading role in promoting social, economic and environmental justice through their projects, and should have a specific statement in their strategic plan to that effect.
- 3 Funding for the following Fire Prevention, Fuel Reduction, Defensible Space

4 Staff for the SNC have made a strong presence in our community and have become very aware of the resource needs within El Dorado County. These personal relationships have made the SNC a strong partner and cooperater in the planning and implementation of resource management. Thank you!

5 No but keep up the grants - school districts have a hard time qualifying for funds that suburban and urban districts are eligible for. Therefore grants to protect the watershed - like the tire derived grant and the turf are essential for us. We also need \$ for our track....so keep us in mind! Support the efforts of Almanor Research Institute at Chester High School. The institute actively engages students 7-12 in watershed investigations. It supports an operational trout hatchery that raises the trout spawned from wild trout in Lake Almanor. It also supports classes such as AP  
6 Environmental Science, Aquaculture, Limnology, Advance Biology, Aquatic Chemistry, and College Prep Biology. ARI also has an afterschool club for junior high students called Jr. High ARI.

7 Long term sustainable funding..any and all!

8 Protection of endangered and threatened plants and animals.

9 Coping with climate change is intertwined with healthy forests.

10 I think you've really nailed them.

11 Yes, much of what the SNC can do will be facilitated and channeled through local planning processes. One of these underway in most areas in the Sierras is the Integrated Regional Water Management Plan Program. While focusing on water management most IRWM's end up addressing multiple aspects of land use and resource planning due to the realization that the landscape in the Sierras is composed of a common infrastructure that must be managed as a whole. That is, the man made infrastructure and the natural infrastructure. This is integrated resources planning distilled down to its most common element. Helping facilitate and fund IRWM efforts in the Sierras will have the added benefit of attracting additional funds to the region via Proposition 84 and !E as bond sales take place.

12 No, you have a pretty comprehensive list.

13 increase lands put into permanent conservancy status (non-developable).

14 Capacity for viable organizations to continue their work is critical!

15 My only comment regarding the SNC is that, having lived and worked in the Sierra's for many years, it seems we have so many environmental groups working in this area...sometimes in competition with each other....I'd really like to see SNC become an umbrella organization that links these non-profits, regulating agencies, and small grassroots associations for the overall benefit of the Sierra's. In addition, a focus on the public agencies that are trying to walk a fine line between providing services and investing in sustainable, renewable energy and trying to minimize the environmental impact of our infrastructure would be an additional benefit. Is there any way these groups could work together? I also suggest a strong involvement in the Sierra Nevada Integrated Regional Water Management Planning required by the state...

16 I know this is tough, but there is no focus when one tries to do too much. Better to pick 2-3 things to focus on, and expand capacity as excellence in the chosen areas are achieved... Healthy ecosystems require healthy communities. Failure to develop healthy communities dooms every other initiative and prolongs community polarization. SNC regional reps must get a  
17 grip on SNC serving the underserved rather than catering to elites. You can pick whatever areas of focus you choose from this, but cultural (competence)/economic equity's been MIA in your efforts to date.

18 Work with the California Tahoe Conservancy to increase public funding for projects. Create support foundation in order to solicit private funds and be better able to accept charitable donations.

19 Small diameter timber to affordable housing supply chain

20 Become a catalyst and facilitator to insure that every Sierra Nevada community has the opportunity to develop a community endowment fund for its long term strategic needs.

21 Linking the urban people through urban forestry with the healthy forests and watersheds focus area. Over 70% of the drinking water for people in California come from the Sierras. How many people know this fact. I see an opportunity for the Sierra Nevada Conservancy to work with the Forest Service to foster relationships (and funding sources) from the water districts in the Region and outside the Region and the Department of Water Resources to fund watershed restoration projects (in particular meadow restoration projects).

22 Work with local governments in the Sierra Nevada Region rather than trying to usurp local government's jurisdiction and authority.

23 Fire is missing except as part of healthy forests. That is where it belongs but it could also be referenced in several other places.

24 Cleaning up Abandoned Mines

25 Some of the focus areas mentioned (i.e. energy, smart growth, working landscapes) can be accomplished by local orgs. I think the SNC is a unique org that needs to highlight its potential by focusing on how to serve best as an umbrella and/or direct support for local capacity building.

## Section 2: Guiding Principles

In Section 2 of the survey, Respondents were asked to give feedback on how well the SNC has been fulfilling its Guiding Principles over the past 5 years. They were asked to rank how consistently the SNC has been using these principles over the past five years on a scale from “Rarely” to “All the Time”. Twenty-nine fewer people took this section of the survey than the previous section, probably due to the length of the survey and there were far more “No Opinion” answers in this section, indicating that stakeholders may not feel familiar enough with the Guiding Principles or how the SNC carries out its work.

Despite the high numbers of “No Opinion” responses, the results of this section of the survey were generally positive. When “No Opinion” responses were excluded from the total, in all but three cases, (questions 19, 21 and 27) 74% or more of Respondents ranked the SNC’s consistency of using the Guiding Principles as “Quite Often” and “All the Time” as shown in the following table.

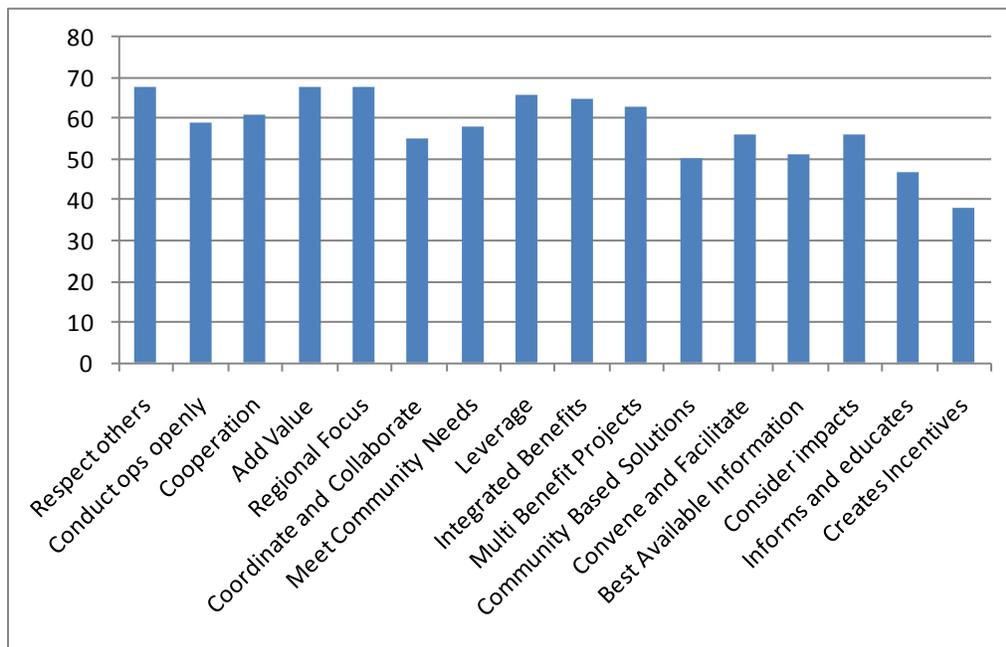


Table 6: Combined % of "Quite Often" and "All the Time" responses (excluding "No Opinion" responses.)

The level of “No Opinion” responses to this Section of the survey can be seen in the Table below.

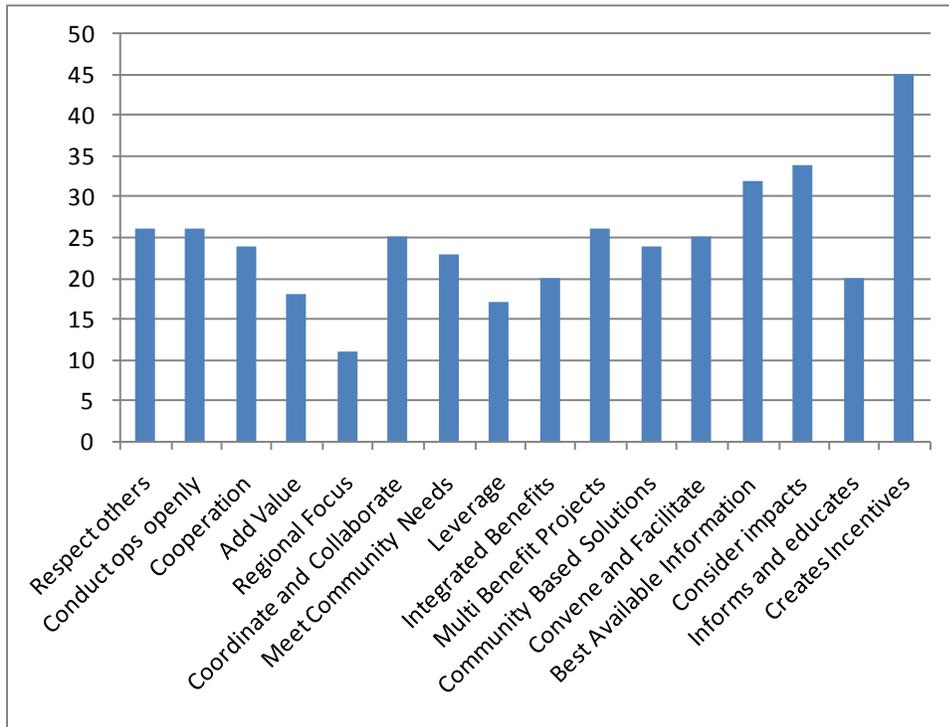


Table 7: Number of "No Opinion" responses

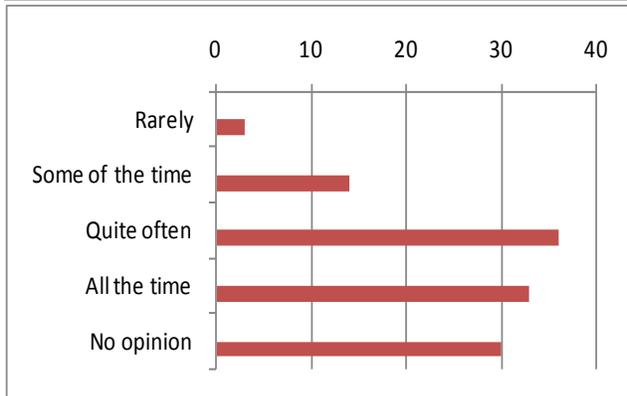
The highest number of “No Opinion” answers in Section 2 was for Question 27: “The SNC purchases, and/or creates incentives.....”

**Detailed responses to individual questions were as follows:**

**Question 16: The SNC conducts operations openly. Decision making is transparent, and we always strive to improve communications throughout the Region.**

**16. The SNC conducts operations openly. Decision making is transparent, and we always strive to improve communications throughout the Region.**

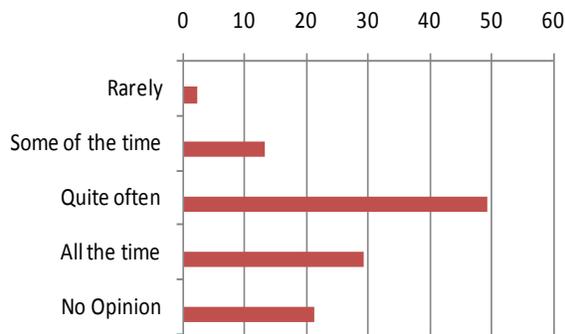
Rarely	3	3%
Some of the time	14	12%
Quite often	36	31%
All the time	33	28%
No opinion	30	26%
<b>Total</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>100%</b>



This Guiding Principle was ranked 6th out of 13 in the combined rankings of “Quite Often” and “All the Time.”

**Question 17: The SNC seeks to “add value” and build upon existing community and Regional efforts.**

17. The SNC seeks to “add value” and build upon existing community and Regional efforts.		
Rarely	2	2%
Some of the time	13	11%
Quite often	49	43%
All the time	29	25%
No Opinion	21	18%
<b>Total</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>100%</b>



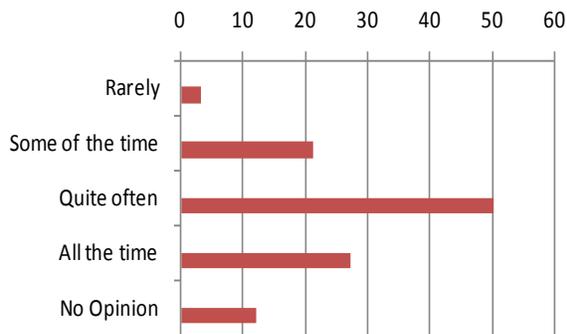
This Guiding Principle was ranked joint first in the combined rankings of “Quite Often” and “All the Time” along with:

- Question 31: The SNC respects the mission, responsibilities and obligations of other agencies and organizations and
- Question 18: The SNC brings a Regional focus to the issues of the Sierra Nevada, collecting and sharing information across the Region and communicating the benefits and contributions of the Region.

**Question 18: The SNC brings a Regional focus to the issues of the Sierra Nevada, collecting and sharing information across the Region and communicating the benefits and contributions of the Region.**

**18. The SNC brings a Regional focus to the issues of the Sierra Nevada, collecting and sharing information across the Region and communicating the benefits and contributions of the Region.**

Rarely	3	3%
Some of the time	21	19%
Quite often	50	44%
All the time	27	24%
No Opinion	12	11%
<b>Total</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>100%</b>

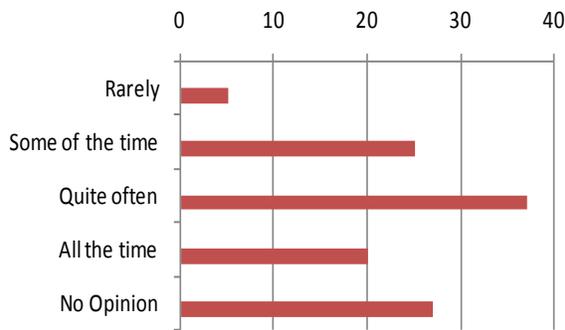


This Guiding Principle was ranked joint first in the combined rankings of “Quite Often” and “All the Time” along with:

- Question 31: The SNC respects the mission, responsibilities and obligations of other agencies and organizations and
- Question 17: The SNC seeks to “add value” and build upon existing community and regional efforts.

**Question 19: The SNC encourages community-based solutions and assists communities with technical expertise, information and resources necessary to achieve local solutions.**

19. The SNC encourages community-based solutions and assists communities with technical expertise, information and resources necessary to achieve local solutions.		
Rarely	5	4%
Some of the time	25	22%
Quite often	37	32%
All the time	20	18%
No Opinion	27	24%
<b>Total</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>100%</b>

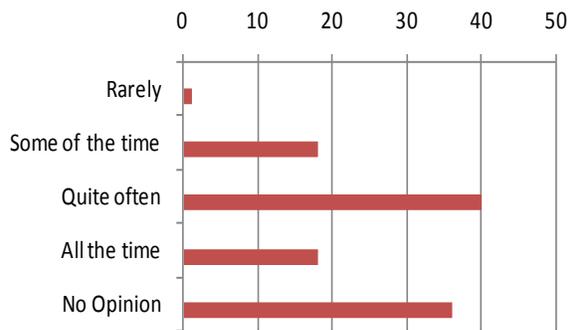


This Guiding Principle was ranked 11<sup>th</sup> out of 13 in the combined rankings of “Quite Often” and “All the Time” and was one of the three Guiding Principles that had fewer than 70% of Respondents ranking it as “Quite Often” and “All the Time.”

**Question 20: The SNC uses the best available information and science in making decisions, identifying opportunities to fill information and technical gaps and building on, and expanding, community information.**

**20. The SNC uses the best available information and science in making decisions, identifying opportunities to fill information and technical gaps and building on, and expanding, community information.**

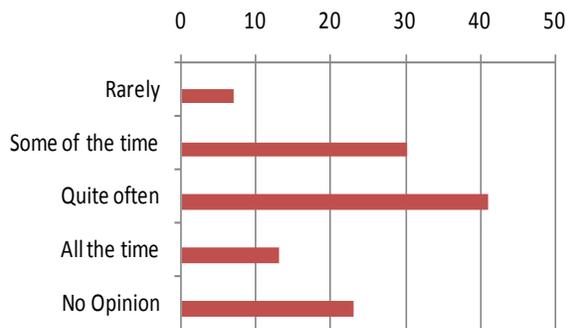
Rarely	1	1%
Some of the time	18	16%
Quite often	40	35%
All the time	18	16%
No Opinion	36	32%
<b>Total</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>100%</b>



This Guiding Principle was ranked 10<sup>th</sup> out of 13 in the combined rankings of “Quite Often” and “All the Time”

**Question 21: The SNC informs and educates the public throughout the Region and the State about the important contributions the Sierra Nevada provides to all Californians, including providing clean water for many uses outside the Sierra, access to world-class recreation and tourism and the production of a variety of important commodities.**

<b>21. The SNC informs and educates the public throughout the Region and the State about the important contributions the Sierra Nevada provides to all Californians, including providing clean water for many uses outside the Sierra, access to world-class recreation and tourism and the production of a variety of important commodities.</b>		
Rarely	7	6%
Some of the time	30	26%
Quite often	41	36%
All the time	13	11%
No Opinion	23	20%
<b>Total</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>100%</b>

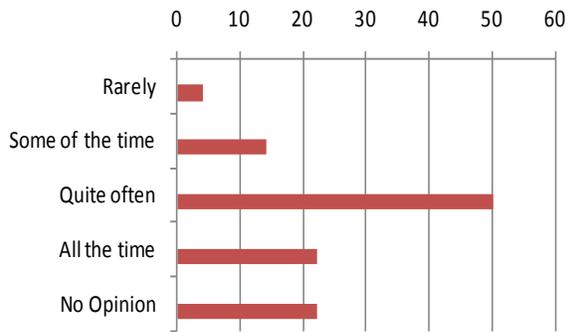


This Guiding Principle was ranked 12<sup>th</sup> out of 13 in the combined rankings of “Quite Often” and “All the Time” and was one of the three Guiding Principles that had fewer than 70% of Respondents ranking it as “Quite Often” and “All the Time.”

**Question 22: The SNC strives to identify and implement activities that result in integrated environmental, economic and social benefits rather than “either or” outcomes.**

**22. The SNC strives to identify and implement activities that result in integrated environmental, economic and social benefits rather than “either or” outcomes.**

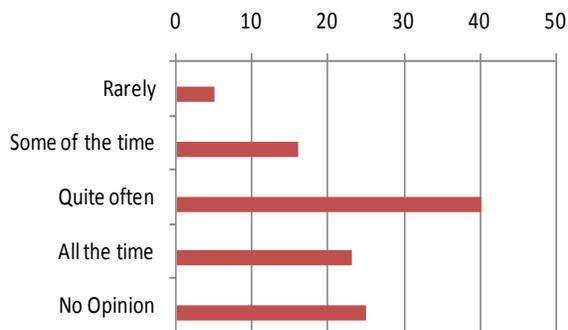
Rarely	4	4%
Some of the time	14	13%
Quite often	50	45%
All the time	22	20%
No Opinion	22	20%
<b>Total</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>100%</b>



This Guiding Principle was ranked 3rd out of 13 in the combined rankings of “Quite Often” and “All the Time.”

**Question 23: The SNC develops program priorities considering the input received through community outreach efforts and seeks to meet community needs, recognizing local and Regional differences.**

<b>23. The SNC develops program priorities considering the input received through community outreach efforts and seeks to meet community needs, recognizing local and Regional differences.</b>		
Rarely	5	5%
Some of the time	16	15%
Quite often	40	37%
All the time	23	21%
No Opinion	25	23%
<b>Total</b>	<b>109</b>	<b>100%</b>

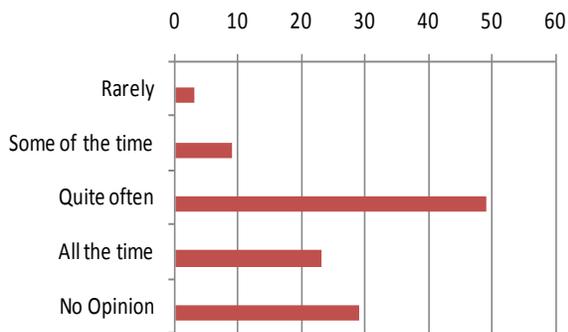


This Guiding Principle was ranked 7<sup>th</sup> out of 13 in the combined rankings of “Quite Often” and “All the Time.”

**Question 24: The SNC gives priority to multi-benefit projects and integrated activities (those that address more than one of the SNC’s program objectives.)**

**24. The SNC gives priority to multi-benefit projects and integrated activities (those that address more than one of the SNC's program objectives.)**

Rarely	3	3%
Some of the time	9	8%
Quite often	49	43%
All the time	23	20%
No Opinion	29	26%
<b>Total</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>100%</b>

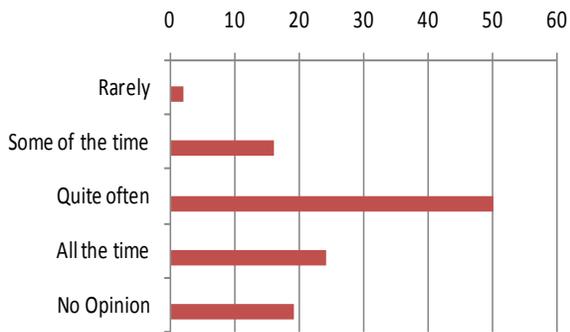


This Guiding Principle was ranked 4<sup>th</sup> out of 13 in the combined rankings of “Quite Often” and “All the Time.”

**Question 25: The SNC encourages projects and activities that leverage other organizations' (government, private and non-profit) competencies and funding.**

**25. The SNC encourages projects and activities that leverage other organizations' (government, private and non-profit) competencies and funding.**

Rarely	2	2%
Some of the time	16	14%
Quite often	50	45%
All the time	24	21%
No Opinion	19	17%
<b>Total</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>100%</b>

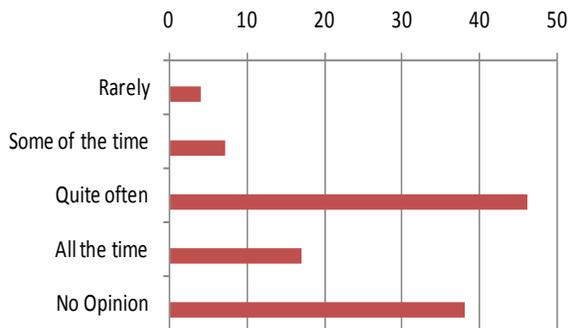


This Guiding Principle was ranked 2<sup>nd</sup> out of 13 in the combined rankings of “Quite Often” and “All the Time.”

**Question 26: The SNC evaluates projects considering what is occurring on surrounding lands, cognizant of potential impacts to those landscapes.**

**26. The SNC evaluates projects considering what is occurring on surrounding lands, cognizant of potential impacts to those landscapes.**

Rarely	4	4%
Some of the time	7	6%
Quite often	46	41%
All the time	17	15%
No Opinion	38	34%
<b>Total</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>100%</b>

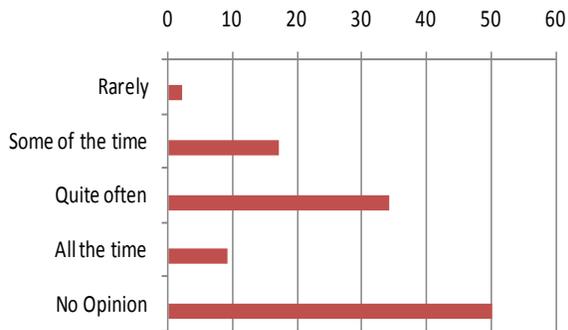


This Guiding Principle was ranked 8<sup>th</sup> out of 13 in the combined rankings of “Quite Often” and “All the Time.”

**Question 27: The SNC purchases and/or creates incentives for the purchase, where practical, of resources for goods and services within the Sierra Nevada Region. We diligently seek opportunities to improve the economic well-being of communities in the Region.**

**27. The SNC purchases and/or creates incentives for the purchase, where practical, of resources for goods and services within the Sierra Nevada Region. We diligently seek opportunities to improve the economic well-being of communities in the Region.**

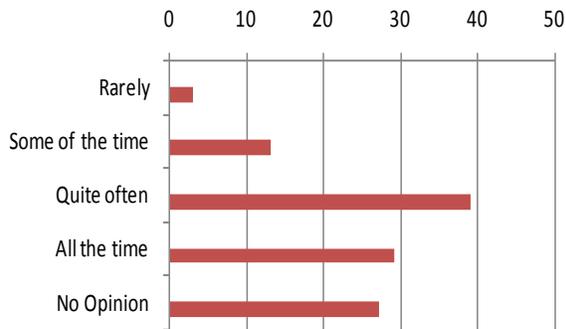
Rarely	2	2%
Some of the time	17	15%
Quite often	34	30%
All the time	9	8%
No Opinion	50	45%
<b>Total</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>100%</b>



This Guiding Principle was ranked last out of all the Guiding Principles when Respondents were asked how consistently the SNC has been using this principle over the past five years. It was also received more “No Opinion” responses than any other Guiding Principle.

**Question 28: The SNC emphasizes cooperation with local governments and other governmental, tribal and nongovernmental partners in providing information, technical assistance and financial support to assist in meeting mutual goals.**

28. The SNC emphasizes cooperation with local governments and other governmental, tribal and nongovernmental partners in providing information, technical assistance and financial support to assist in meeting mutual goals.		
Rarely	3	3%
Some of the time	13	12%
Quite often	39	35%
All the time	29	26%
No Opinion	27	24%
<b>Total</b>	<b>111</b>	<b>100%</b>

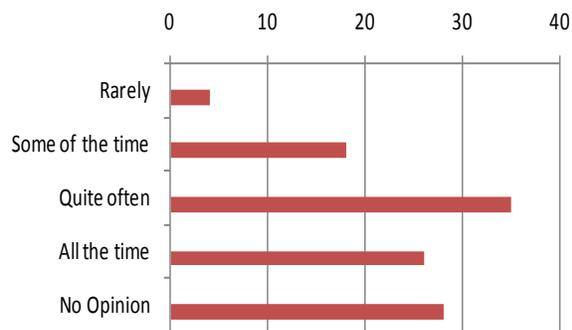


This Guiding Principle was ranked 5<sup>th</sup> out of 13 in the combined rankings of “Quite Often” and “All the Time.”

**Question 29: The SNC coordinates and collaborates with all partners to achieve research, project funding and program goals.**

**29. The SNC coordinates and collaborates with all partners to achieve research, project funding and program goals.**

Rarely	4	4%
Some of the time	18	16%
Quite often	35	32%
All the time	26	23%
No Opinion	28	25%
<b>Total</b>	<b>111</b>	<b>100%</b>

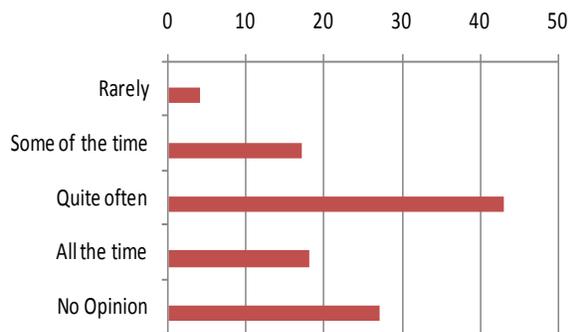


This Guiding Principle was ranked 9<sup>th</sup> out of 13 in the combined rankings of “Quite Often” and “All the Time.”

**Question 30: The SNC convenes and facilitates interested parties to seek solutions for difficult problems to achieve environmental, economic and social benefits.**

**30. The SNC convenes and facilitates interested parties to seek solutions for difficult problems to achieve environmental, economic and social benefits.**

Rarely	4	4%
Some of the time	17	16%
Quite often	43	39%
All the time	18	17%
No Opinion	27	25%
<b>Total</b>	<b>109</b>	<b>100%</b>

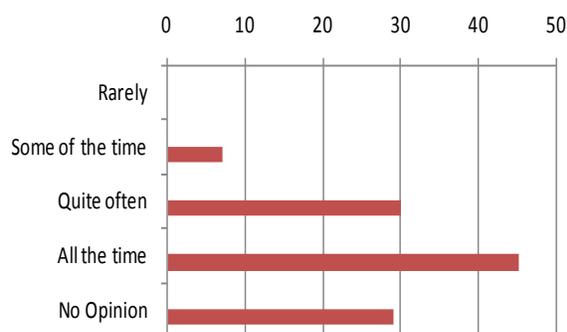


This Guiding Principle was ranked 8<sup>th</sup> out of 13 in the combined rankings of “Quite Often” and “All the Time.”

**Question 31: The SNC respects the mission, responsibilities and obligations of other agencies and organizations.**

**31. The SNC respects the mission, responsibilities and obligations of other agencies and organizations.**

Rarely	0	0%
Some of the time	7	6%
Quite often	30	27%
All the time	45	41%
No Opinion	29	26%
<b>Total</b>	<b>111</b>	<b>100%</b>



This Guiding Principle was ranked 1st out of 13 in the combined rankings of “Quite Often” and “All the Time.”

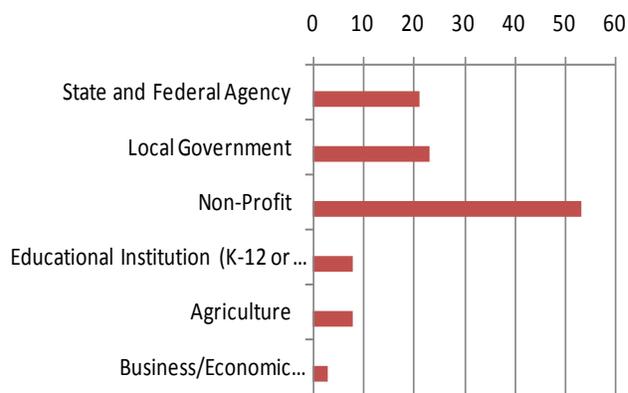
### Section 3: Respondents

#### Question 32: What primary constituency does your organization represent?

All respondents were asked to choose which primary constituency they belonged to. The majority (almost half) the respondents were non-profits, with governmental agencies (either state/federal or local government) being the next most popular choices with 19% and 20% respectively. Educational institutions, agriculture and business and economic development were less well represented. As many of the SNC’s grant recipients are non-profits it is not surprising that they were the largest respondent group.

**32. What primary constituency does your organization represent?**

State and Federal Agency	21	19%
Local Government	23	20%
Non-Profit	53	47%
Educational Institution (K-12 or university)	8	7%
Agriculture	8	7%
Business/Economic Development	3	3%



# **APPENDIX 1: Comments**

Respondents were given the opportunity to comment on each question and gave answers as follows:

## **COMMENTS: SECTION 1**

### **1 INVESTMENT IN THE SIERRA NEVADA**

1	Hard to know exactly what the mission is of the SNC. Too young and it has been stymied by politics and funding.
2	Balance investments in man-made and natural infrastructure. They are all part of the "whole" system and cannot be ferreted out in isolation and piecemeal.
3	What investment , where would the money come from?
4	Finding funding for Public Education projects, Strongly Agree
5	Helping people make the connection between the Sierra resources and their livelihood and well being is key to a sustainable future. Bringing investments into the Sierra to protect and preserve those resources is worthy of SNC's mission.
6	Who would say no? Seriously?
7	I strongly agree - and would like to see more emphasis on sustainable economic development that improves natural resources and communities health and vibrancy
8	The Sierras are key to wood, water, forage & recreation

### **2 ADVOCACY AND EDUCATION**

1	Educate State representatives about importance of funding public education projects, strongly agree
3	Education is the basis for change. An uneducated stakeholder base cannot make informed decisions. This should be paramount in SNC's work.
4	PIs don't forget working landscapes & viable rural communities

### **3 REGIONAL IDENTITY**

1	Agree with regional identity; do not agree with "more unified voice"
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2	This could fall under advocacy and education. SCLTC shares this vision as well.
3	It all depends on what that identity is. It could be good and it could be bad.
4	We have a regional identity. Provide support for advocating for that identity, connecting supporting programs, etc, would benefit the Sierra.
5	agree to a point; but there are some unique differences
6	Please don't do it to us , let residents be a part of this process!
7	I see this as the realm of other groups.
4	The Sierras are key to wood, water, forage & recreation
	<b>4 CLIMATE CHANGE</b>
1	minimize funding here and focus on key priorities
2	While important and necessary to acknowledge the reality of CC, I would say there is not much to go on yet in terms of planning projects.
3	I agree if this includes the eastern Sierra Nevada; if it is a west slope only I select somewhat disagree
4	The modeled range of climate change effects is so wide that this is a venue in which much money can be wasted chasing the wrong assumption.
5	Educate the large population of what effects us in the Sierras also effects them, strongly agree
6	Not in a big way over the next 3 year as there is still so much to be learned. This could also be a subset of education for now. Also, this is inherent in on the ground activities such as land conservation. So it need to be a part of other things rather than a stand alone activity for people to connect the dots.
7	Some people don't believe that our actions are affecting the climate. But few might argue that breathing exhaust is bad for you. You may not want to focus so much on "Climate Change" as the primary title in certain audiences. You're going to have talk money, health and jobs instead.
8	By and large, SN youth disbelieve climate change occurs. Outreach involving youth ed is critical.
9	Should include outreach to all the small communities, many if not most of which do not understand climate change and think it is not occurring. Informative forums put on by a reputable entity like SNC would really help, especially if put on in the towns themselves, so people, including skeptics, might actually attend.. There is tremendous misinformation being put out in the community, including from most of the small town newspapers. For example, my community's "Mt. Democrat" is just non stop with the climate change is a hoax message.

10	Important yes, but the science (about what to do about it) seems to be still evolving. This may become a focus area in the future.
11	Responding to climate change will not be "more of the same." Ecosystem composition and dynamics will change, and planning for climate change must anticipate those changes.
	<b>5 GEOTOURISM</b>
1	geotourism concept is great, but but it's somewhat suspect in who gets to control the information quality and detail presented--some commercial interest having the final say about the information--National Geographic
2	Support lower impact types of public use on wilderness lands and sensitive landscapes.
3	I agree but with the caveat that many areas are already overused beyond their capacity. Emphasis should be on targeting those underutilized places and those places with greatest potential economic benefit to rural communities
4	Who gets to decide the content of character traits? Typically it's migrants from elsewhere.
5	again, don't forget viable working landscapes
6	This, to me, is the realm of other groups. Although I agree it is critical to the economic development of the region.
	<b>6 HEALTHY FORESTS AND WATERSHEDS</b>
1	Strongly agree. More focus should be spent on thinning forests and reducing Western Juniper population.
2	minimize funding for parts already a priority of USFS
3	Strongly Agree. Healthy ecosystems sustain life.
4	Our recent grant to install artificial turf was a great example of protecting the watershed. We wish we could apply for funding for the track too!
5	agree, but not sure I buy carbon sequestration--shifts focus away from managing for healthy forest ecosystems
6	Healthy forests is often a code phrase to promote logging at the same rates as in the 1980's. So, based on that, I completely disagree
7	Through management NOT acquisitions in fee title. There is enough land off the tax base in the Sierras already.
8	SNC could serve as convener in larger dialogue about means of acquiring funding for watershed protection and restoration, including consideration of watershed enhancement funds tied to end water user fees

9	Genuine comprehension of forestry issues tends to escape SNC.
10	Only focus on the small WUI and don't spend time and resources on the entire forest. Not enough resources to do this.
11	Strongly agree - according to research particulate air pollution - ozone/NOX from urban areas is creating potential impacts as well.
12	Our forested lands are within the watersheds that provide water to down stream users - this will be good for us and in turn good for them too!
<b>7 LONG TERM EFFECTIVENESS OF SNC</b>	
1	Far too early to know value of SNC. Evaluate after more of a track record.
2	More outreach could do this - more face-to-face sessions with small communities.
3	Agree.....but good luck in this economic climate!
4	SNC should only gain state and federal funds - not private dollars. Going for private dollars competes with partners.
5	collaborate vs compete with other organizations, agencies and institutions for funding
<b>8 CAPACITY OF ORGANIZATIONS ALIGNED WITH SNC'S MISSION</b>	
1	Not sure exactly what this means.
2	This is the job of those organizations, not SNC
3	Yes, and also groups should be encouraged to collaborate or merge in this economy, and not be competitive with each other.
4	Agree.....but you need to be selective and assure the orgs share your goals
5	Strongly agree - should align with Resource Conservation and Development Councils - such as Yosemite-Sequoia RCD
<b>9 CLEARINGHOUSE FOR THE SIERRA NEVADA</b>	
1	Not sure exactly what this would look like. Hard to envision and seems to overlap with cooperative extension.

2	As long as the effort does not take on too much.
3	Yes unless task is already a mission of another organization
4	I strongly agree. Idea: work with Sierra trail and open space mgmt agencies to set up a clearinghouse Sierra trail destination guide, website, maps, vacation/getaway planner. Include difficulty levels, maps, nearby services, connectivity, guides for each allowed use, guides for interpretive/historical tourism, etc. Receive support of local businesses who provide shuttle, gear, lodging, etc. This could also expand to include water trails (rafting/kayaking). Every agency has its own trail maps, but nobody has put it together into a "Sierra Nevada Trail Guide". This would sut a number of your other focus areas as well. Placer County would love to assist.
5	Not a realistic goal for the next 3 years. There are more pressing issues.
6	yes, if you have the capacity to do it well.
7	Would agree, if there is no duplication of efforts with other agencies. The process is already to cumbersome
8	Fine....but lower priority right now
9	please do in coordination with other research institutions like UC and CSU
10	As long as Local Communities would not have to seek SNC Board approval for local projects. I would not care for another layer of Government.
11	There are other subregional groups already doing this
12	I don't see the problem this is addressing. Do we need this really?
<b>10 REGIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE</b>	
1	Not the role for a Conservancy
2	Other entities are better suited to pursue this objective
3	Better to educate local communities on how they can work with transportation planning agencies and local broadband providers to meet their local needs.
4	I am assuming by 'build' you mean support the building of, not actually doing the work. Also, the infrastructure SNC gets involved in should be 'green' infrastructure.
5	This needs to be expanded to include organizational capacity (e.g., non-profits capable of contracting with local governments for cost effective delivery of quality services).

6	Transportation yes; broadband undertaken by others; again focus resources
7	Subset project that others should be part of.
8	This would help to conserve energy and resources by enabling folks to telecommute. Now folks can't do it or operate businesses effectively because of no pipeline or limited bandwidth...Great idea!
10	I think this needs to be re-worded. These are important issues for sure, but what is our role in building them in the Sierra?
11	While this is important I think it would distract from the core priorities that the organizations is best at accomplishing.
12	Not your mission? This is Ec Dev and there are other organizations better suited to do this.
13	Check and balance planning so as not to loose the culture and character of communities in the name of progress
14	I don't think the Conservancy should build transportation networks. I hope "broadband" means wireless because we are going beyond physical wires at this point. I wouldn't want to see the Conservancy be the primary implementer of this type of project but rather the funder/planner/facilitator. On this note, I would like to see the SNC be a guiding force on how the Sierra can produce alternative energy both in big, small, and local size projects.
16	Overinflated. Take care of what we have first.
17	Agree - However, need to improve capital infrastructure such as water and waste systems (not expansions - just improvements)
18	Improved public transportation would be so good. Even if existing tour buses were required to accept public passengers.
19	How is the Conservancy going to have any real impact on this?
20	Broad band yes; railroad & public transit yes; road improvements maybe
<b>11</b>	<b>RENEWABLE ENERGY</b>
1	Again not the role for the Conservancy
3	Strongly agree. Reducing Western Juniper population provides renewable energy.
5	We need a regional energy plan in order to capture as much attention and resources toward this end as possible. We need to actively participate in CEC programs as part of our regional identity building and educational outreach activities.
6	While this is important I think it would distract from the core priorities that the organizations is best at accomplishing.

7	Again - what is your mission. This list is huge and wide - do you REALLY have the capacity to be all these things to all of the region?
8	Small behind the meter projects much preferable to large acreage commercial projects.
9	is hydro considered renewable energy?
10	This needs a stronger caveat that the renewable energy projects not negatively impact the SNC's other goals and natural resource objectives. "Cause for concern" is too flip a phrase. The SNC should be a guide as to how to implement very small projects on a very local level as well as small to big Sierra projects. Again, the SNC should not be the primary "implementer" of these types of projects.
11	Only distributed renewables - not large centralize plants that can increase negative impacts
12	Yes, but minimize environmental & quality of life impacts
13	Biomass harvesting must benefit forest ecology
<b>12 SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES AND SMART GROWTH</b>	
1	This is better addressed by more locally-oriented efforts
2	Tough area for the SNC to be effective since the region is schizophrenic on growth. If the SNC could play a role in bringing enviro's to smart growth it would be great.
3	Yes but watch out for clichés like the ever nebulous "smart growth"
4	While this is an important element of future growth, I would be concerned that SNC may be duplicating efforts. What could SNC add to this issue that is not already being done by the SACOG blueprint project and other COG efforts?
5	Many of the so called "sustainable and smart growth models" are applicable to urban and flat landscapes. Many are quite ridiculous when dropped willy nilly on a Sierra Watershed based on a blueprint from U.C. Davis.
7	Promote regulations that make it easier for small producers, artists and fabricators to survive.
8	Not a priority as this is being done effectively at the grass roots level - - for the most part.
9	This is a very important topic, but not SNC's.
10	This is a function of local government and should not be attempted on a regional basis
11	This is what got agencies like TRPA in trouble and off mission

**13 WORKING LANDSCAPES**

1 what's your definition of sustainable? Does it include economics? conservation easements can be a double edged sword.

2 Not sure what is meant by 'support'. Local land conservation groups b

3 Again, a vital topic, but others are already effectively doing this. SNC can't do everything.

Please help to provide models and regional food supply infrastructure to create a viable regionally-based supply and demand infrastructure that will help preserve ranches, farms, and forests. It is in keeping with the SNC's other goals to support organic food production. I am concerned about the proposed broad statement of support for mines; we have so many aging mines that have severely degraded our waters. I can't really see how I could agree that the SNC would help keep mines that degrade our rivers and ecosystem up and running. However, if there are mines that don't negatively impact the SNC's other goals regarding natural resource protection, 4 then I might be able to agree with the above statement with regards to mining.

5 Clearcutting must stop; mining may not be ecologically sustainable

6 These "working landscape" arguments are trojan horses for a lot of people and organizations who want to preserve approaches that have resulted in the existing problems in the Sierra Nevada. They aren't solutions.

7 This should be the main goal

**16 The SNC conducts operations openly. Decision making is transparent, and we always strive to improve communications throughout the Region.**

1 I don't know how decisions are made.

2 Have not had enough interaction to have an opinion. Sorry.

3 I feel that there is poor communication to the point that I don't know what you are doing for us.

**COMMENTS SECTION 2:**

**17 The SNC seeks to "add value" and build upon existing community and Regional efforts.**

3 I'm not familiar enough with the efforts of the SNC in this area to answer this question

**18 The SNC brings a Regional focus to the issues of the Sierra Nevada, collecting and sharing information across the Region and communicating the benefits and contributions of the Region.**

1 I'm not aware of this.

2 Need more PR and communication of successes.

**The SNC encourages community-based solutions and assists communities with technical expertise, information and resources necessary to achieve local solutions.**

1 I've not seen this in our community.

3 Sierra County is a mess (politically, economically, socially)....not sure you guys have been a positive presence up there.

**The SNC uses the best available information and science in making decisions, identifying opportunities to fill information and technical gaps and building on, and expanding, community information.**

1 I'm not aware of this.

**The SNC informs and educates the public throughout the Region and the State about the important contributions the Sierra Nevada provides to all Californians, including providing clean water for many uses outside the Sierra, access to world-class recreation and tourism and the production of a variety of important commodities.**

1 I've not seen anything like this.

3 do not preach to the choir

**The SNC gives priority to multi-benefit projects and integrated activities (those that address more than one of the SNC's program objectives.)**

2 Again, not enough personal info to know this

**The SNC purchases and/or creates incentives for the purchase, where practical, of resources for goods and services within the Sierra Nevada Region. We diligently seek opportunities to improve the economic well-being of communities in the Region.**

3 Limiting the statement to "economic" well-being is too narrow. I would like to have a statement that includes the health of our residents and quality of life in our communities. So often economic well-being has been boom and bust in the Sierra; we need these other indicators to add levity and breadth to this statement of principle.

**29 The SNC coordinates and collaborates with all partners to achieve research, project funding and program goals.**

3 "All partners" seems a bit much. I suggest amending it to leave out "all".

**33 Do you have any other comments or suggestions?**

1	SNC is just what the Sierra Nevada needed! I am really excited and happy with their progress, growth and success.
2	I believe that we need to fund studies/solutions for invasive plant management.
3	Thank you for asking!
4	great job seeking input like this--your agency is doing a great job--government at its best.
5	Keep the great work going. We've only touched the "tip of the ice berg"!
6	I don't have much insight into the workings of the SNC and thus cannot offer an opinion of questions 16-31.
7	SNC is an asset to the Sierra's, the region and the state. You all do a great job.
8	Placer County has benefitted greatly from SNC support including staff input and participation on projects and grant funding. The SOG program is particularly valuable as it fills niches in project funding that no other grant source provides. The culture at SNC is uniquely helpful, creative, and proactive with the necessary beaurocracy minimized to serve the mission rather than the all-too-typical government manner of programs feeding the beaurocracy. Please don't change!
9	Being an SNC employee, it seems this series of questions is best for others to determine.
10	SNC staff are doing a great job in a difficult time. They also handle the responsibility of being "ownership neutral" and evaluating new concepts and ideas in an admirable fashion. Their next challenge will be to "step outside the phalanx" and form the SNC into an organization that is systemic to not only state government, but to the local agencies, people and communities of the Sierra. That is the horizon upon which the SNC must fix it's vision.
11	How many people really know about the SNC? Does the public?
12	This survey only allows me to click one button or click comment. There are many that I wanted to click an agree or disagree AND comment.
13	I wish you well!
14	Under #32, significantly, there's no category of tribal community.
15	Keep up the good work.
16	Keep up the good work
17	I'm glad you exist. Keep up the good work.
18	Some of these questions make me realize that I don't know the SNC like I should. I guess we are not very involved in these "collaborative" SNC activities. Don't know that I am aware of how we might be more involved...



## **APPENDIX 2: Methodology and Error Structure**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **Survey Design**

This survey was designed and written by SNC staff in consultation with Joan Keegan, SNC, Assistant Executive Officer. The purpose of the survey was twofold, firstly to elicit feedback on potential Areas of Focus that will be central to the SNC's new Strategic Plan and secondly to get feedback on how well we have been fulfilling our Guiding Principles over the past 5 years.

The Survey was designed to be completed in 10-15 minutes in a convenient, online format through the survey hosting service Zoomerang.com. The Survey included 33 questions in 2 main categories: Areas of Focus and Guiding Principles and a short section on Respondent Demographics and Comments.

#### **Deployment**

The survey was launched on the evening of Friday July 9, 2010, and was sent via individual, personalized email from within the Zoomerang website. This deployment method enabled staff to easily send two follow up reminders to people who had not yet completed the survey. In order to ensure maximum response rate, each email showed a sender of Joan Keegan and a subject line of "Sierra Nevada Conservancy Strategic Planning Survey." The survey was closed on the evening of July 26, 2010.

#### **Survey Audience**

The survey was designed to reach as many of the organizations and individuals that are active within the Sierra Region as possible, allowing each email recipient to complete the survey once. The survey was sent to the "SNC blast list" which contains 1,262 names and addresses. Additionally, several organizations were asked to include information about the survey in their newsletters encouraging their members to take the survey. SNC staff was excluded from the list (although at least three received it) as staff was asked for their opinions at a series of face-to-face meetings.

#### **Response Rate**

Out of the 1,262 delivered by individual email address, 145 responded --- a reasonably high response rate of 11%. Initially there was a glitch in the survey distribution mechanism and various people received a message saying that they couldn't take the survey. These people all received a new weblink directing them to take the survey again and they did so successfully.

### **ERROR STRUCTURE**

Staff did not conduct a survey of each and every agency and organization that would be affected by the SNC's new Strategic Plan. As with most surveys, consultants polled a sample of that larger set by sending the survey to a list of the most active individuals and organizations within the Sierra Region, collected from various sources (see Section 3: Survey Audience, above).

The benefit of an email-based survey is that it enabled the SNC to collect input from a wide variety of organizations in a timely fashion without the need for face-to-face meetings—giving SNC feedback on how to develop our new Strategic Plan.

However, it is important to recognize that this sampling method results in a non-random survey method. Despite the fact that individuals from different types of organizations—agriculture, government agencies, educational institutions, etc.—will have different feedback on the SNC’s new Strategic Plan, staff did not receive equal numbers of respondents from each organization type.

For these reasons, this survey should not be interpreted as representative of all of the people who would benefit from the SNC’s new Strategic Plan. Despite this bias, the results of this survey give important insight into the needs and expectations of some of the Sierra Region’s most active and interested individuals and organizations.

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