



"Sierra Nevada Conservancy's growing partnership with Yosemite National Park is a model for this type of collaboration. SNC is helping Yosemite achieve excellence through its grants to projects such as the Comprehensive Interpretive Plan. The CIP is connecting public, tribal, and private stakeholders to the interpretive and educational messages delivered in and around our national parks."

**Tom Medema, Branch Chief
Interpretive Field Operations
Yosemite National Park**

Clearing Storm, Yosemite
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Our First Year of Grant Making

Video: ▶ [Kerri Timmer, SNC Program Manager](#)

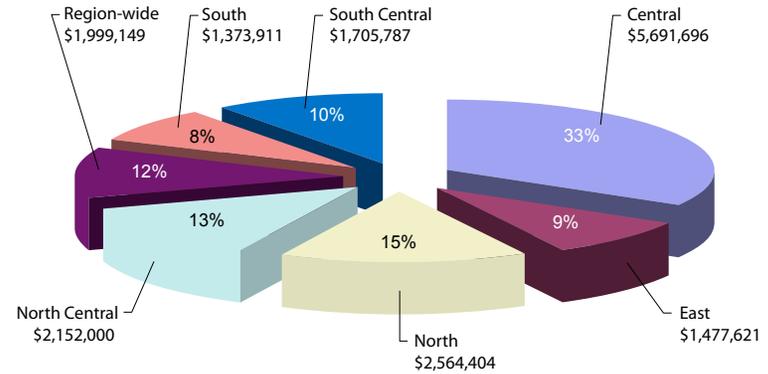
The SNC was pleased to have met its first year grant-making goal of awarding nearly \$17 million into the hands of local governments and other organizations throughout the Sierra Nevada for projects designed to advance environmental improvement and social and economic well-being in the Region. The awarded funds came from Proposition 84, the *Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coast Protection Bond Act of 2006*.

The SNC received 230 eligible applications with requests totaling close to \$41 million. We were able to fund 146 of those requests across all six SNC Subregions, for a total State investment of \$16.9 million.

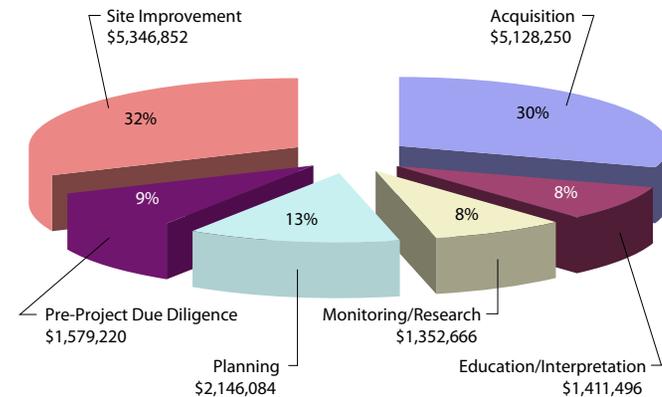
The SNC awarded two types of grants in fiscal year 2007-08—Competitive Grants and Strategic Opportunity Grants (SOG). Competitive Grants were awarded for acquisition and site improvement projects between \$100,000 and \$1,000,000 without regard to geographic location. Strategic Opportunity Grants were awarded by [Subregion](#) to a variety of project types including: (a) acquisition and site improvement projects up to \$100,000; and (b), education/interpretation, monitoring/research, planning and pre-project due diligence projects. The SNC funded 18 Competitive Grants in the amount of \$8,344,335 and 128 SOGs for a total of \$8,620,233.

Most projects featured strong collaboration among partners, use of innovative approaches and/or implementation of locally based solutions designed to make a difference in the Region’s communities and beyond. For a list of funded projects by Subregion and by project category and purpose, please see Appendices A and B.

Fiscal Year 2007-08 Grant Distribution by Subregion



Fiscal Year 2007-08 Grant Distribution by Project Category



Notes: Competitive Grants are awarded without regard to geographic location; fiscal year 2007-08 Competitive Grants total: \$8,344,335. Proposition 84 Grants Program funded by the *Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Act of 2006*.

The SNC provided funds to city and county governments, non-profit community organizations, state and federal agencies, local water agencies, tribal entities, fire safe councils and others to support projects in six major categories: acquisition or landowner agreements (easements), restoration or site improvement, pre-project due diligence, educational or interpretive activities, monitoring and research, and planning and design. To illustrate each category and give you a taste of the exciting work going on in the Region, we've highlighted a number of funded projects in the section below.

Restoration or Site Improvement

The SNC funded 37 projects designed to protect, improve or restore land, water or other natural resources in the Region, for a total of \$5.3 million. We've highlighted two of these projects below.

Filippini Ranch (North-Central Subregion)

Videos: [Mike Filippini, Ranch Owner](#)

▶ [Video 1](#)

▶ [Video 2](#)

The Filippini Ranch is a 1,200-acre family cattle ranch located in Sierra Valley, on the headwaters of the Feather River watershed. Streamside or “riparian” areas along one mile of stream flowing through the ranch have been damaged by cattle grazing, resulting in impacts to downstream water quality, stream function and wildlife habitat. The SNC funding is helping to build fencing to keep cattle out of the stream and will support work with students from the local Future Farmers of America and Loyalton High School ROP to replant streamside vegetation for the protection and enhancement of fish habitat, water quality, and migratory bird habitat.

The students will also be involved in long-term monitoring of the project to determine its success. The Filippini family hopes this project will serve as a model for other property owners in the area whose ranchlands are experiencing similar impacts from grazing or other uses.

Acquisition or Landowner Agreements

The SNC funded eight projects in this category, for a total of \$5.1 million. Funding went toward acquisition of property in fee title or completion of a voluntary agreement, also known as an “easement,” between a landowner and an eligible conservation organization limiting certain uses of the land to protect working farms and ranches, wildlife habitat, recreational use and other natural resources.

Bohna Ranch Conservation Easement (South-Central Subregion)

Videos: ▶ [Bridget Fithian, Sierra Foothills Conservancy](#)

▶ [Cindy Bohna, Landowner](#)

Bohna Ranch is an 840-acre family-owned cattle ranch in Mariposa County containing two streams that feed into the San Joaquin River as well as significant grassland, oak woodland and streamside habitat. The landowner is protecting the ranch and its operations into the future by placing a voluntary conservation easement on the property. Such an easement will help the landowner by providing capital for improved ranch operations and ongoing conservation activities and reducing the overall value of the property, resulting in a reduction in taxes and enabling the owner to keep the ranch in the family; it will help ensure continued water quality, quantity and habitat benefits through improvements and other requirements agreed to in the easement; and it will help the local and regional economy

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by maintaining a working cattle ranch in the agricultural portion of the County. Once the project is completed, it will likely generate interest among neighboring landowners, as well, which may lead to additional conservation projects in the area.

Pre-Project Due Diligence

The SNC awarded \$1.6 to 24 projects, including pre-project analysis, permitting and other due diligence work in preparation for future acquisition, easement or restoration projects. Below is an example of one of these projects.

Coldstream Canyon Design and Permitting for Creek and Floodplain Restoration (Central Subregion)

Videos: ▶ Lisa Wallace, Executive Director, Truckee River Watershed Council
▶ Beth Christman, Program Manager, Truckee River Watershed Council
▶ Cyndi Walck, Engineering Geologist, CA Dept of Parks and Recreation

Coldstream Canyon drains a 12.5-square-mile watershed extending from the crest of the Sierra Nevada to just west of the Town of Truckee. The creek and its surrounding floodplain area have been impacted by various uses over time, from construction of the railroad and later Interstate 80 to historic timber and gravel mining activities. Together these activities have resulted in increased sediment and flooding in Coldstream Canyon and the Truckee River, as well as negative effects on habitat and watershed health. Through the collaborative efforts of the Town of Truckee, the Truckee River Watershed Council, California Department of Parks and Recreation and the private industrial landowner, this project will complete design and engineering work to remove sediment and create new floodplain areas for streamside vegetation and habitat. Once complete, this project will reduce

sedimentation into the Truckee River, reduce the risk of future flooding in Truckee and provide improved habitat for wildlife in this fast-growing area.

Education and Interpretation Activities

The SNC awarded \$1.4 million to 28 educational or interpretive projects, including curriculum development, educational events or programs, and production of outreach materials about fire risk reduction, natural resource management, water quality, climate change and other topics. One of these projects is highlighted below.

California Amer-Asian Resource Education (CARE) Environmental Ethics in the Sierra Nevada (South and South Central Subregions)

Videos: ▶ Robyn Smith, Yosemite/Sequoia Resource Conservation & Development
▶ Chong Yang, President CARE
▶ Tony Spada, California Department of Fish and Game, Warden
▶ Dave Martin, Bass Lake District Ranger

The California Amer-Asian Resource Education organization (CARE) is partnering with the Yosemite Sequoia Resource Conservation & Development Council to produce a video targeted to Hmong and Laotian communities illustrating outdoor/conservation practices. While Southeast Asians make up a relatively small percentage of the area's overall population, they comprise a significant part of the public land users in these watersheds. According to CARE, members of the Southeast Asian community typically get their information verbally through radio or film, as opposed to written materials or signs. This project will develop a 20- to 30-minute video series to visually and verbally share information in Hmong and Laotian regarding camping, hunting, fishing, food gathering, and other uses of public lands in the Sierra, with the intent of engaging the Southeast

Asian community in safety and conservation concerns, reducing conflicts between user groups and supporting sustainability of public resources into the future.

Monitoring and Research

The SNC awarded \$1.4 million to 21 projects in this category, including research and monitoring related to specific resource conditions, climate change impacts, fire and other natural disaster risks, water quality and recreation use/impacts. We've highlighted one of these projects below.

Mercury Bioavailability and Transport in Deer Creek (Central Subregion)

Videos: ▶ [Joanne Hild, Executive Officer, Friends of Deer Creek](#)
▶ [Saul Hensen, Hydrologist](#)

Mercury in Sierran watersheds is one of the legacy impacts left over from the Gold Rush. The movement of mercury from places where it was abandoned by miners along Sierra streams and rivers into downstream reservoirs and beyond needs to be better understood in order to prevent mercury contamination and accumulation in the food chain. Understanding key mechanisms of mercury transport and transformation from one form (solid) to another (methylated) will allow for improved treatment of source areas, such as rock piles containing mine waste or hydraulic mining debris, and better prevention to avoid human health impacts from mercury exposure. This project uses sampling and analysis of sediment, water quality and macroinvertebrates both above and below a reservoir on Deer Creek to determine mercury movement patterns. The data collected will be used to develop recommendations for reducing methylmercury in this and other watersheds affected by gold mining in the Sierra.

Planning and Design

The SNC awarded \$2.1 million to 28 planning or design projects in this category. Projects included collaborative resource planning efforts, design of future acquisition or restoration work, and projects targeted at improving a community's or individual organization's capacity to implement protection or enhancement projects in the future. One of these projects is highlighted below.

Mammoth Lakes Basin Interagency Collaborative Planning (East Subregion)

Videos: ▶ [John Wentworth, Executive Director, Mammoth Lakes Trails and Public Access Foundation](#)
▶ [Michael Schlafmann, Deputy District Ranger, Inyo National Forest](#)
▶ [Danna Stroud, Tourism and Recreation Director, Town of Mammoth](#)

The Mammoth Lakes Basin attracts more than 3 million visitors annually. That level of visitation can have negative impacts on the basin's system of high country lakes, streams and other waterways that feed into the Owens River and Los Angeles Aqueduct. This collaborative planning effort involving the Town of Mammoth Lakes, the Forest Service and the non-profit Mammoth Lakes Trails and Public Access (MLTPA), will analyze transportation, circulation and recreation facilities, needs and capacity in the Mammoth Lakes Basin, resulting in development and future implementation of specific projects to improve watershed health while meeting the area's recreational needs.

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Fire-Safe Projects

This year, as in many years past, fire is on people's minds in California and the Sierra. On June 20, 2008, a severe thunderstorm system moved through northern and central California sparking more than 2,000 fires that burned over a million acres destroyed 511 structures and took 15 lives. Based on summary statistics from the Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, major fires in Butte, Lassen, Mariposa, Modoc, Mono, Plumas, Shasta and Tehama counties and lesser fires elsewhere burned some 200,000 acres in the Sierra Region.

The SNC takes this threat seriously. In its first year of grant making, the SNC awarded more than \$3 million for 31 different fire-safe projects throughout the Region, including defensible space assistance, hazardous fuel reduction, biomass removal, community chipping, fire-safe education and outreach, community wildfire protection planning, and more. One of these projects is highlighted below.

Calaveras Healthy Impact Product Solutions (CHIPS) (South Central Subregion)

- Videos:
- ▶ Steve Wilensky, SNC Governing Boardmember
 - ▶ Brian Creekmore, Crew Boss
 - ▶ Crewmember
 - ▶ Homeowners

The CHIPS project is a multi-benefit project that reduces fire threat while revitalizing the local economy in rural Calaveras County. CHIPS uses local crews for removal and treatment of small-diameter wood and underbrush on public and private land to reduce fire threat create a marketable product (chips for landscaping and other uses) and protect watershed health in the Mokelumne watershed. Communities in this area have been hard-hit by the closure of eight local lumber mills over the past 20 years. Funding from the SNC will help to train and provide work experience for 18-24 currently unemployed or underemployed local residents, as well as to secure additional materials for future value-added CHIPS activities, such as manufacture of wood pellets, posts and poles, composition fire logs, craftsman woodworking products, and energy generation. This project is a clear example of the "New Forest Economy," where ecological, economic and social issues are blended into a successful outcome for the environment, the community and the economy.

