

**STATE OF CALIFORNIA
SIERRA NEVADA CONSERVANCY**

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

Applicant: SEQUOIA RIVERLANDS TRUST

Project Title: PRE-ACQUISITION WORK ON FOUR STRATEGIC LAND CONSERVATION PROJECTS

Subregion: SOUTH

County: TULARE AND KERN

SNC Funding: \$198,500.00

Total Project Cost: \$317,000.00

Application Number: 412

Final Score: 90.3

PROJECT SCOPE

The purpose of the project is to conduct site evaluations and produce appraisals necessary to conserve three large ranches and one smaller one, lands strategically located to improve climate change resilience in the southern Sierra Nevada foothills. The three large properties are among the Southern Sierra Partnership's (SSP) top six priorities for protection, based on results of the SSP's recent climate-adapted conservation planning effort. The project will facilitate protection of roughly 40,000 acres of blue oak woodland, grassland, rare communities such as vernal pools and sycamore alluvial woodlands, habitat for and occurrences of numerous special status species and many miles of high quality riparian corridors connecting these other habitats. In addition, these projects, when completed, will assist in protecting working landscapes in Tulare and Kern counties. The protection of these lands and their resources is an important component of Proposition 84 goals. And, securing important natural resources and retaining working landscapes are essential components of the SNC's Program Areas. This project is supported by \$118,543 of funding in addition to the SNC's funding support.

PROJECT SCHEDULE

DETAILED PROJECT DELIVERABLES	TIMELINE
<p>Conduct Site Assessment and Appraisals at Mebane, Hershey, Flynn and Craig Ranches:</p> <p>Mebane Ranch</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete biological field evaluation of upper elevation portions of the ranch • Complete environmental site assessment for entire ranch • Complete negotiation of Phase 1 purchase and sale agreement and conservation easement terms • Confirm funding for Phase 1 conservation easement or fee title acquisition • Execute Phase 1 of option agreement and close the transaction • Define Phase 2 conservation easement, outline easement terms • Appraise value of Phase 2 conservation easement • Identify probable funding source for Phase 2 and beyond; apply for Phase 2 funding <p>Hershey Ranch</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confirm phased option agreement to acquire fee title and/or conservation easements on the entire ranch • Facilitate DFG approval of draft Deer Creek Conceptual Area Protection Plan • Complete biological field evaluation for entire ranch • Complete environmental site assessment for entire ranch • Complete negotiation of Phase 1 purchase and sale agreement and conservation easement terms • Confirm funding for Phase 1 conservation easement or fee title acquisition • Execute Phase 1 of option agreement and close the transaction • Define Phase 2 conservation easement and outline easement terms • Appraise value of Phase 2 conservation easement and/or fee title acquisition • Identify probable funding source for Phase 2 and beyond; apply for Phase 2 funding <p>Flynn Ranch</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop phased option agreement to acquire conservation easements on parts of the ranch not included in Phase 1 • Draft White River Conceptual Area Protection Plan and submit to DFG for review and approval • Complete environmental site assessment for parts of the ranch not included in Phase 1 • Define Phase 2 conservation easement and outline easement 	<p style="text-align: center;">May 2011-March 2013</p>

terms • Appraise value of Phase 2 conservation easement • Identify probable funding source for Phase 2 and beyond; apply for Phase 2 funding Craig Ranch • Complete biological records search and field evaluation to confirm values relevant to Case Mountain ACEC • Appraise value of the property per the revised parcel map • Assist BLM with securing the property • Coordinate with BLM to complete environmental due diligence and other pre-acquisition work to ready the property for BLM acquisition	
Progress Report	November 2011
Progress Report	May 2012
Progress Report	November 2012
Final Report	May 2013
FINAL PAYMENT/FINAL PAYMENT REQUEST	May 2013

PROJECT COSTS

PROJECT BUDGET CATEGORIES	TOTAL SNC FUNDING
Project related staff/personnel expense	\$28,595.00
Project related travel	3,545.00
Project related consultant expense	112,386.00
Project related materials and supplies	1,150.00
Appraisals and Valuation Updates	36,000.00
Project Administration	16,824.00
GRAND TOTAL	\$198,500.00

PROJECT SUPPORT LETTERS

- Audubon California
- Sierra Business Council
- The Nature Conservancy
- Pacific Ag Management, Inc.
- Tulare Basin Wildlife Partners

PROJECT PERFORMANCE MEASURES

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

- Linear Feet of Stream Bank Protected or Restored
- Number of Significant Sites Protected or Preserved
- Acres of Land Conserved

PROJECT SUMMARY

Sequoia Riverlands Trust Category 2 Application to SNC Proposition 84 Grants Program

County: Tulare

Applicant: Sequoia Riverlands Trust

Project Title: Pre-acquisition Work on Four Strategic Land Conservation Prospects in the Southern Sierra Foothills

PROJECT GOAL

The purpose of the project is to take advantage of a window of opportunity to conserve three large ranches and one smaller, but strategically located property, to improve climate change resilience in the southern Sierra Nevada foothills. The three large properties are among the Southern Sierra Partnership's top six priorities for protection, based on results of the SSP's recent climate-adapted conservation planning effort. Sequoia Riverlands Trust and its partners have been working on each of these land protection opportunities for at least two years, and momentum seems to be building to bring them to fruition. Each needs a well-placed investment – an appraisal, or Conceptual Area Protection Plan, or biological evaluation, or focused attention on negotiations and partnership development – to move the project toward conserved status.

The project will facilitate protection of roughly 40,000 acres of blue oak woodland, grassland, rare communities such as vernal pools and sycamore alluvial woodlands, habitat for and occurrences of numerous special status species and many miles of high quality riparian corridors connecting these other habitats.

PROJECT SCOPE

The project includes such activities as appraisals, biological evaluations, environmental site assessments, focused negotiations with landowners, and development of innovative conservation partnerships focused on protecting four significant properties in the Kaweah, Deer Creek, White River, Poso Creek and Kern River drainages.

LETTERS OF SUPPORT

Letters of support are provided from SRT's fellow members of the Southern Sierra Partnership (The Nature Conservancy, The Sierra Business Council and Audubon-California), the Tulare Basin Wildlife Partners, and the potential conservation buyer for the large ranch near Bakersfield.

Due to the confidential nature of most of these transaction at this stage, SRT did not seek letters of support from other conservation groups or public entities.

SNC PROJECT DELIVERABLES AND SCHEDULE

It is difficult to predict the exact timing of the tasks proposed for this grant since they are dependent on progress of negotiations with landowners, uncertain capacity of agencies, issues that may be discovered during title searches and so forth. Tasks that are anticipated for each property during a two-year grant period are listed more or less sequentially below, followed by a schedule of SNC grant reporting milestones.

Mebane Ranch

- Complete biological field evaluation of upper elevation portions of the ranch
- Complete environmental site assessment for entire ranch
- Complete negotiation of Phase 1 purchase and sale agreement and conservation easement terms
- Confirm funding for Phase 1 conservation easement or fee title acquisition (acquisition funds not in this SNC grant)
- Execute Phase 1 of option agreement and close the transaction
- Define Phase 2 conservation easement, outline easement terms
- Appraise value of Phase 2 conservation easement
- Identify probable funding source for Phase 2 and beyond; apply for Phase 2 funding

Hershey Ranch

- Confirm phased option agreement to acquire fee title and/or conservation easements on the entire ranch
- Facilitate DFG approval of draft Deer Creek Conceptual Area Protection Plan
- Complete biological field evaluation for entire ranch
- Complete environmental site assessment for entire ranch
- Complete negotiation of Phase 1 purchase and sale agreement and conservation easement terms (as applicable)
- Confirm funding for Phase 1 conservation easement or fee title acquisition (acquisition funds not in this SNC grant)
- Execute Phase 1 of option agreement and close the transaction
- Define Phase 2 conservation easement and outline easement terms
- Appraise value of Phase 2 conservation easement and/or fee title acquisition
- Identify probable funding source for Phase 2 and beyond; apply for Phase 2 funding

Flynn Ranch (Phase 2)

- Develop phased option agreement to acquire conservation easements on parts of the ranch not included in Phase 1
- Draft White River Conceptual Area Protection Plan and submit to DFG for review and approval
- Complete environmental site assessment for parts of the ranch not included in Phase 1
- Define Phase 2 conservation easement and outline easement terms
- Appraise value of Phase 2 conservation easement
- Identify probable funding source for Phase 2 and beyond; apply for Phase 2 funding

Craig Ranch

- Complete biological records search and field evaluation to confirm values relevant to Case Mountain ACEC
- Appraise value of the property per the revised parcel map
- Assist BLM with securing the property (e.g. finding a partner that would enable SRT to acquire and hold the property until BLM receives LWCF funding)
- Coordinate with BLM to complete environmental due diligence and other pre-acquisition work to ready the property for BLM acquisition

SNC Grant Reporting Milestones

By June 2011	Execute Prop. 84 grant agreement between SNC and SRT
By Nov. 2011	Submit six-month progress report to SNC
By May 2012	Submit annual progress report to SNC
By Nov. 2012	Submit eighteen-month progress report
By May 2013	Submit final report and payment request to SNC

SNC PROJECT COSTS

PROJECT BUDGET CATEGORIES	TOTAL SNC FUNDING
Project-related staff/personnel expense	\$28,596
Project-related travel	\$3,545
Project-related contracts/consultants (including SRT Executive Director)	\$112,386
Project-related materials & supplies	\$1,150
Appraisals, valuation updates, title reports	\$36,000
Project administration	\$16,824
SNC GRANT TOTAL	<u>\$198,500</u>

