

Grant # 070171: Sierra Water Trust: Building Capacity in the Sierra Nevada to Assess and Fulfill Critical Flow Augmentation Needs

Applicant: American Rivers

Grant Category: SOG 2

Amount Requested: \$45,000

Purpose: Build capacity, train and provide technical assistance to groups working in the Sierra a non-regulatory, market-based approach to the acquisition of water rights from willing sellers, and the dedication of these rights to in-stream flow needs.

Staff Recommendation: Staff is recommending authorization of the project as proposed. Total amount recommended is \$45,000.

The Sierra Water Trust project will help build the capacity of groups working within the Sierra by providing training and education in the acquisition of water rights to increase the long-term effectiveness of stream, river, and lake restoration and protection projects in the region.

Letters of Support:
none

CEQA: A Notice of Exemption will be filed with the State Clearinghouse.

Project Description Summary from Applicant:

The overall goal of this project entitled “*Sierra Water Trust: Building Capacity in the Sierra Nevada to Assess and Fulfill Critical Flow Augmentation Needs*” is to improve water quality and increase aquatic function and biodiversity in Sierra rivers and creeks. Specific objectives in support of this goal are to:

1. Build capacity of Sierra organizations to use water rights acquisition as a tool for stream restoration;
2. Improve capacity of Sierra organizations to examine watershed problems in a broader hydrologic context;
3. Facilitate the use of river science in managing and monitoring water rights acquisition; and
4. Promote sustainable solutions to watershed problems through strong public-private partnerships.

Ultimately, this project will contribute towards restoring and protecting the degraded creeks, streams, and rivers and ecologically endemic aquatic life of the Sierra. Its chief contributions – ensuring permanent protection through systematic water acquisitions; building capacity; facilitating stewardship; and advancing restoration – will help preserve the lifeblood of the Sierra.

Sierra Trust Water Principles

- 1) *Voluntary transactions based on “willing seller, willing buyer”*
- 2) *Part of the larger context of managing water to maximize uses and benefits, including consumptive and ecosystem needs*
- 3) *Based on scientific knowledge and social and local economic conditions*
- 4) *Accomplished through partnerships*
- 5) *Includes on-going, long-term monitoring and accountability*