

SNC pumps \$1.2 million into Mariposa

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Two agencies in Mariposa County will share a portion of the \$10 million recently awarded by the Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC). The Mariposa Public Utility District (MPUD) and the Upper Merced River Watershed Council are beneficiaries of the SNC's watershed protection grant projects.

MPUD has received grant funding of \$1 million from the Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control,

River and Coastal Protection Bond Act of 2006 (Proposition 84) through SNC. The money will be used to acquire land adjacent to the Stockton Creek Reservoir.

The primary purpose of the acquisition, according to MPUD Manager Mark Rowney, is for watershed protection. "The district will be able to manage the land to provide fuel modification for wildland fire mitigation, reduce contaminate run-off to the public water source and create a buffer between the reservoir and private land," Rowney said in a news release.

In addition, MPUD plans to build trails for public use. "Although public access directly to the reservoir is not part of the project, the trails on nearly 500 acres of land will provide spectacular views of the reservoir and Stockton Creek canyon," Rowney continued.

MPUD and SNC will be working together throughout the development of this project. More information on the public access will be made available as the process is developed.

The Upper Merced River Watershed Council will get \$192,279 for invasive weed management. The money will go toward removing yellow starthistle and Italian thistle from riparian habitat along the Upper Merced River, around 80 acres of sensitive river area and to stop the spread of these invasive plants.

"These projects will provide jobs and a variety of benefits to the Sierra Nevada region, including reducing the risk of large damaging fires, restoring meadows, protecting habitat, supporting working ranches and improving water quality," SNC Executive Officer Jim Branham said. "This work is important to all Californians who enjoy the water, scenic beauty, and other resources the Sierra Nevada provides."

SNC awarded \$10 million to foothill counties in this round of funding, bringing its total to \$40 million. Mariposa County was the single largest beneficiary in this funding cycle. Other counties awarded project grants include Placer, El Dorado, Lassen, Modoc and Madera.