

## **Background**

The Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) policy and outreach efforts are focused on engaging in state planning and policy activities that address the challenges and needs of the Sierra Nevada Region. SNC's communications efforts are primarily designed to complement and illustrate the policy objectives of SNC and the Region, and therefore the audience that staff efforts strive to influence are key state and federal policy decision makers.

The Communications and Outreach Team utilizes a number of tools to distribute SNC's message, including "new media" ([Facebook](#), [YouTube](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#)), traditional media (radio, newspapers, and TV), existing communications networks, events like the [Great Sierra River Cleanup](#), and the [SNC Website](#) and [Sierra Nevada Watershed Improvement Program](#) website.

## **Current Status**

### **Measuring the "Virtual Success" of the WIP Summit**

Over half of the 247 attendees of the 2018 Sierra Nevada Watershed Improvement Program (WIP) Summit took in the presentations and discussion online via the live broadcast. Attendees both in person and online represented state and federal agencies, water agencies, environmental organizations, the timber industry, tribes, businesses, local governments, land trusts, research and education institutions, recreation and tourism providers, and the agricultural industry. The audience was made up of roughly the same groups as past years, but overall attendance at the 2018 event was the highest when compared to all other years.

In addition to participation on the day of the event, SNC generated a significant amount of attention around the Summit's topics on social media. Staff tracked a solid increase in views and "engagement," or interaction with content shared, across all social media platforms as a result of a series of promotional videos, graphics, and animations created in support of the Summit. These promotional products were shared most by nonprofit organizations, other state agencies, and businesses. During the Summit promotional period, SNC's Facebook page gained 42 new page likes, Twitter gained 14 new followers, Instagram gained 40 new followers, and partners shared more of the products created for 2018 than they have during past outreach campaigns. See [Attachment A](#) for a more detailed breakdown of which audiences engaged with SNC's social media activities on each platform.

### **2018 Annual Report**

The Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) is required by statute (Public Resource Code Section 33350) to "*make an annual report to the Legislature and to the Secretary of the Natural Resources Agency regarding expenditures, land management costs, and administrative costs.*" These reports have both a legal purpose and provide an education and outreach opportunity for the SNC, and in the past reports have ranged from professionally-designed booklets to formal letters, depending on SNC's available resources.

This year, staff is proposing a new two-phased approach to meet both the legal requirement and take advantage of the educational opportunity. Staff will draft a formal letter which will focus on the fiscal year's expenditures, land management costs, and administrative costs as required by statute. This letter will be submitted to the legislature and the Secretary of the Natural Resources Agency by December 30, 2018 as required by statute. In addition, staff will develop a professionally-designed report that covers the calendar year's activities which can be used as more of a marketing piece in support of SNC's programs. This marketing piece will cover the 2018 calendar year, and be distributed once the legislature returns to Sacramento in early 2019.

Staff plans to bring an outline of key issues likely to be addressed in the 2018 Annual Report to the Board for review at the September 2018 Board meeting and will present a final draft to the Board for approval and feedback in December.

### **Tenth Annual Great Sierra River Cleanup**

This September marks the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the [Great Sierra River Cleanup](#) (GSRC), the annual volunteer event that SNC coordinates in conjunction with California Coastal Cleanup Day to encourage stewardship of California's waterways from the Sierra to the sea. This year's event will be held on Saturday, September 15, 2018 from 9 A.M. to noon. Cleanups are scheduled in all 22 counties in the SNC Region, and staff will be developing a media and social media outreach plan to support the event. Board participation in the Great Sierra River Cleanup is always welcome and Boardmembers interested in supporting or participating in this year's anniversary event can contact GSRC Project Coordinator Theresa Burgess for additional information.

The GSRC also kicks off the Third Annual [Sierra Nevada Watershed Protection Week](#), which was designated by the legislature in 2015 to highlight the benefits the Region provides to the state. Staff will be working to develop an outreach plan for Sierra Nevada Watershed Protection Week that builds on the Great Sierra River Cleanup event. Last year, staff worked with a group of legislators to develop a [series of short videos](#) about each legislator's connection to the Sierra Nevada Region. These videos were well received on SNC's social media platforms and will likely serve as a starting point for SNC's Sierra Nevada Watershed Protection Week outreach again this year.

### **Traditional Media Engagement**

Staff has continued to work with interested media outlets on stories related to forest health and SNC's policy objectives. In late March, SNC worked with CALMatters, a nonprofit online media outlet focused on state agencies and policies on [a story](#) about forest management and state policies on prescribed fire, reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and biomass utilization. Staff also helped to support the development of a photojournalist's project on tree mortality which was [published by BuzzFeed News](#) in late April. SNC also worked with a reporter from the Sacramento News and Review on a story about forest health and greenhouse gas emissions which is scheduled to publish at the beginning of wildfire season.

Wildfire Awareness Week was May 7-11, and staff worked closely with CAL FIRE and other partners to connect and distribute messages during that week that support the WIP and associated funding and policy goals. SNC Communications Manager Brittany Covich participated in two events, speaking at the Redding event.

**Next Steps**

Staff will continue to track and engage in traditional media and social media opportunities in support of SNC's policy objectives. Planning for the Great Sierra River Cleanup, the Annual Report, and the coming wildfire season 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 share their thoughts and comments.**