

**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: EASTERN SIERRA LAND TRUST

Project Title: MONO COUNTY LAND DONATION AND EXCHANGE

Subregion: EAST SIERRA

County: MONO

SNC Funding: \$61,814.00

Total Project Cost: \$64,394.00

Application Number: 425

Final Score: 91.4

PROJECT SCOPE

This project will complete the due diligence activities which will lead to the donation of a 385 acre property located north of Bridgeport, near the summit of the Sweetwater Mountains and a 40 acre parcel located on Green Creek, south of Bridgeport in Mono County. The first in-holding is the site of an historic silver mine and contains two creeks; while the second property is the site of the historic hydro-power plant that powered what is now the ghost town of Bodie. These parcels are within the Walker River Basin in a watershed which is at risk due to water diversions and other factors threatening the endangered Lahontan Cutthroat. The protection of this property will assist in ensuring that the water quality and quantity are not further impacted due to development or other intensive land use. While accepting this donation of lands and exchanging them for non-conservation lands, the Eastern Sierra Land Trust will achieve SNC's program goal of protecting, conserving and restoring the region's physical, cultural, archaeological, historical and living resources.

PROJECT SCHEDULE

DETAILED PROJECT DELIVERABLES	TIMELINE
Title Review	August 2011
Phase I Environmental Assessment	August 2011

Baseline Conditions Report	October 2011
Appraisal	October 2011
Donation Agreement	November 2011
6 month progress report	November 2011
Land donation completed- escrow closes	December 2011
Enter Land Tenure Program	January 2012
12 month progress report	May 2012
18 month progress report	November 2012
24 month progress report	May 2013
30 month progress report	November 2013
Complete Land Exchange/Transfer	January 2014
FINAL PAYMENT/FINAL PAYMENT REQUEST	March 1, 2014

PROJECT COSTS

PROJECT BUDGET CATEGORIES	TOTAL SNC FUNDING
Staff expenses	\$17,800.00
Travel/meeting expenses	1,000.00
Consultants	12,200.00
Fees, appraisal, escrow, property taxes	22,752.00
Administrative fees	8,062.00
GRAND TOTAL	\$61,814.00

PROJECT SUPPORT LETTERS

- United States Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management
- Mono County Supervisor, District 4
- Mono County Community Development Department
- California Department of Fish and Game
- California Native Plant Society
- Sierra Business Council

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.

- Percent of Pre-Project and Planning Efforts Resulting in Project Management.

PROJECT SUMMARY

County: Mono

Applicant: Eastern Sierra Land Trust (ESLT)

Project Title: Mono County Land Donation and Exchange

PROJECT GOAL

The primary goal of this project is to permanently protect and preserve two significant parcels that are located within federally owned lands in Mono County. Parcel #1 is a 385 acre property located near the summit of the Sweetwater Mountains, just north of Bridgeport. It is the site of a historic silver mine, contains two creeks, and is within the Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest. Parcel #2 is a 40 acre property located just off of Green Creek Road, south of Bridgeport. It is the site of the historic hydro-power plant that powered Bodie. The property is bisected by Green Creek and is within Bureau of Land Management lands. As "inholdings", the future disposition of these parcels have a particular significance related to the overall functionality and health of the surrounding public lands. The current landowners, a family foundation, desire to donate these lands to ESLT because of the significance of the historic and biological values of the property. ESLT would then begin the processes of exchange and transfer of these two properties to the respective public agency managing the surrounding land. By accepting the donation of these lands and exchanging them for non-conservation lands, ESLT will be able to achieve multiple goals and will address the SNC programmatic goal of protecting, conserving, and restoring the region's physical, cultural, archaeological, historical, and living resources. These properties are located within the watershed of the Walker River Basin, which flows to the terminal lake, Walker Lake. This watershed is at risk due to water diversions and other factors, threatening the existence of an endangered fish, the Lahontan Cutthroat trout. The preservation of these parcels will assist in ensuring that water quality and quantity associated with the properties are not further impacted due to development, mining, or other intensive land use.

PROJECT SCOPE

This grant will allow ESLT to engage in necessary due diligence activities that are required by ESLT standards and practices, in addition to the requirements of the federal agencies that will ultimately receive the properties. After site visits to both properties and discussions with federal agencies, ESLT has determined that a Phase One Environmental Assessment is needed. In addition, completing a biological assessment will allow the agencies and public to have a complete understanding of the natural values that exist on the properties. An appraisal will be completed to determine the current value of the donation and to begin discussions with the BLM and Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest regarding land exchanges. Title review is also necessary prior to the land donation, with associated legal research required on these mining patents and complicated ownership chains. Escrow costs associated with the transaction, including title insurance, are also included. The grant will also allow ESLT staff time to be directed to this important project, including toward the land exchange process, which is lengthy.

This land donation and exchange project is part of at least two larger projects that have been funded by SNC. First, this project is an obvious candidate for the Eastern Sierra Land Tenure

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Project, which has a goal of bringing together various parties to work toward consolidated land ownership patterns that provides economic, environmental, and watershed values. Second, ESLT is currently working on the East Walker River Watershed Assessment and Plan project. One of the recommendations of that plan is expected to be the preservation of lands containing creeks and other significant water resources, such as the two subject properties.

LETTERS OF SUPPORT

- a. Mono County Supervisor, District 4
- b. Mono County Community Development Department
- c. California Department of Fish and Game
- d. California Native Plant Society
- e. Sierra Business Council

SNC PROJECT DELIVERABLES AND SCHEDULE

DETAILED PROJECT DELIVERABLES	TIMELINE
Title review	August 2011
Phase 1 environmental assessment	August 2011
Baseline Conditions Report	October 2011
Appraisal	October 2011
Donation Agreement, 6 mo. report	November 2011
Land Donation completed/escrow	December 2011
Enter Land Tenure Program	January 2012
Continue land exchange process	January 2012
Submit regular 6 month reports	May 2012, ongoing
Complete land exchange process (or make significant progress), final report	January 2014

SNC PROJECT COSTS

PROJECT BUDGET CATEGORIES	TOTAL SNC FUNDING
Staff Expenses	\$17,800
Travel/Meeting expense	\$1,000
Consultants	\$12,200
Fees: Appraisal, escrow, property taxes	\$22,752
Administrative	\$8,062
SNC GRANT TOTAL	\$61,814