



## News

# Conservancy board members plan to tour Rim Fire areas

By [Guy McCarthy, The Union Democrat](#) December 05, 2015 01:00 am

Members of the governing board for the state Sierra Nevada Conservancy plan to tour part of the 2013 Rim Fire burn next week to assess impacts on the Tuolumne River watershed and local communities as part of their quarterly meeting in Sonora.

Depending on the weather, conservancy board members also hope to tour the Moccasin Powerhouse facility, which harnesses Tuolumne River flows and is owned and operated by San Francisco's Public Utility Commission.

The field trip is intended in part to focus on conservancy grants awarded for Rim Fire restoration projects. The board meeting in Sonora will include a report on the Butte Fire, an update on a watershed forest restoration project in Calaveras Big Trees State Park, and discussion of a state grant application to secure federal funding for resiliency in the Rim Fire landscape.

Sierra Nevada Conservancy staff say all events are open to the public. Lunch and transportation are not provided.

The tour is scheduled to begin at 1 p.m. Wednesday at Best Western Sonora Oaks Hotel and Conference Center, 19551 Hess Ave. in East Sonora. A post-tour reception is planned from 5:30 to 7 p.m. at the Sonora Inn, 160 S. Washington St.

The board meeting is planned to start at 8:30 a.m. Thursday at the conference center on Hess Avenue. More information about the tour and the meeting is online at [www.sierranevada.ca.gov](http://www.sierranevada.ca.gov).

Between August and October 2013, the Rim Fire burned 257,314 acres, destroyed 11 houses and 98 outbuildings, leveled several residential camps, caused 10 injuries and cost \$127.3 million to fight. Most of the fire damage occurred in and near the Stanislaus National Forest and Yosemite National Park.

The Butte Fire started Sept. 9 near Charamuga Ranch Road in Amador County, jumped the Mokelumne River into Calaveras County, burned 110 square miles, destroyed more than 800 structures and resulted in the deaths of two residents. Economic losses from the Butte Fire have been estimated at \$450 million, \$225 million of which was covered by insurance. Property losses may have exceeded \$120 million.

Previous conservancy board meetings this year were held in Paradise, North Fork and Sacramento.

The Sierra Nevada Conservancy was created in 2004. It's a state agency, and its stated mission is to improve the environmental, economic and social well-being of the Sierra Nevada region.

According to staff, the conservancy has awarded more than \$50 million in grants for projects to protect and enhance California's primary watersheds by improving forest health, remediating mercury contamination from abandoned mines, protecting critical natural resources and reducing risks of catastrophic wildfire.

The conservancy says the Sierra Nevada region covers 25 million acres, including all or part of 22 counties from the Oregon border to Kern County. The Sierra Nevada is touted as the origin for more than 60 percent of California's developed water supply.

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