

Mountain Democrat

Wednesday, March 9th, 2011 | Posted by [Press Release](#)

Sierra Nevada Conservancy board OKs \$10M in bond-funded watershed protection projects in the Sierra



A HIKER enjoys the meadow at Hazel Creek Campground, where grant money will be used for more improvements. Photo by Jesse Saich

Approximately \$10 million will soon flow to watershed protection projects in the Sierra, including one in El Dorado County, the Sierra Nevada Conservancy announced this week.

The funds represent the sum total amounts of the projects approved by the SNC's governing board at its quarterly meeting in Placerville March 3.

“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,” said SNC Executive Officer Jim Branham. “This work is important to all Californians who enjoy the water, scenic beauty and other resources the Sierra Nevada provides.”

With the approval of these grants, the SNC has now awarded approximately \$40 million in Proposition 84 (Safe Drinking Water Bond of 2006) funding to projects in the Sierra. The following are a highlighted sample of the projects approved:

El Dorado County — Hazel Creek Campground Restoration: \$153,466 was awarded to the El Dorado Irrigation District for pre-project work designed to protect Hazel Creek and Jenkinson Lake (a water supply reservoir for El Dorado County) and restore the campground. Restoration designs and permit applications will be created to stabilize creek beds and to build a foot bridge.

Placer County — Bruin Ranch Property Acquisition: \$1 million was awarded to the Placer Land Trust to help preserve 500 acres of the 2,300-acre Bruin Ranch, one of the last large oak woodland habitat areas in Placer County. Approximately 1,800 acres of the property, which connects to the existing Hidden Falls Regional Park owned by Placer County, has already been preserved. The acquisition will protect watershed, riparian and wetland areas, and will provide recreation trails for the public.

Lassen and Modoc counties — Lower Ash Creek Wildlife Area Restoration Project: \$1 million was awarded for this project, which will restore degraded meadow, riparian and aquatic conditions along the lower portion of Ash Creek within Lassen and Modoc counties. The project area covers 2,400 acres and 27 miles of stream channels within the larger Pit River watershed. The restoration of meadow and stream riparian habitat will meet Proposition 84 goals in watershed and wetlands conservation, habitat rehabilitation and water quality.

Madera County — Topping Ranch Conservation Easement: \$875,890 was awarded to the Sierra Foothill Conservancy to create a conservation easement on 1,362 acres of the historical Topping Ranch in Madera County. The project will protect physical, cultural and living resources of the ranch, expand nearby land conservation efforts, and protect blue oak woodland habitat.

About the Sierra Nevada Conservancy

Created in 2004, the Sierra Nevada Conservancy is a state agency whose mission is to improve the environmental, economic and social well-being of the Sierra Nevada Region.

In its first five years, the SNC, which receives no general fund tax dollars, has awarded nearly \$40 million in grants for projects, including fuels reduction, conservation easements and acquisitions and watershed and habitat