

Sierra Nevada Conservancy Solicits Applications for \$5M 'Healthy Forests' Grants

*Sun-Star staff
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The Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) said it has opened the solicitation period for its \$5 million “Healthy Forests” grant program.

Applicants have until Oct. 21 to submit their pre-application documents. All projects must be designed to benefit Sierra Nevada forests and associated meadows, either by reducing the risk and impacts of large, damaging fires or by preserving or restoring ecosystem function.

All application materials and the grant guidelines, which were recently approved by the SNC governing board, are posted on the SNC website. Public agencies, eligible nonprofit (501(c)(3) organizations whose charitable purposes are consistent with the mission of the conservancy, and federally recognized tribes are encouraged to review the guidelines and apply. After an initial review period, applicants with viable projects will be issued an invitation to submit a full application.

Funding for these projects is provided through Proposition 84, the Safe Drinking Water Bond Act, passed by voters in 2006. In its first five years, the SNC, which receives no general fund tax dollars, has authorized approximately \$40 million in Prop. 84 grants for more than 220 projects throughout the Sierra Nevada region. These projects include fuels reduction, conservation easements and acquisitions, and watershed and habitat restoration.

The SNC governing board is scheduled to take action on this round of grant awards at its regularly scheduled meeting in June, 2012. The SNC has around \$10 million remaining from its original

Prop. 84 allocation. These remaining funds will be evenly allocated over the current and next fiscal years, with a specific focus area assigned for each year.

The focus area for fiscal year 2012-13 funds will be for projects on ranching and agricultural lands. Guidelines and criteria for these project types will be issued in 2012.