

## **\$10 million in watershed protection grants to be considered**

The Sierra Nevada Conservancy's governing board will consider the approval of \$10 million in bond-funded watershed conservation grants and will make a field trip to both the SNC-funded Gold Hill Ranch Wakamatsu Tea and Silk Colony and the Marshall Gold Discovery State Historic Park in Coloma on March 2-3.

"The projects under consideration will provide jobs and a variety of benefits to the Sierra Nevada region, including reducing the risk of large, damaging fires, restoring meadows, 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."

Nonprofit organizations and government agencies apply for the funds through a competitive process. The funds come from Proposition 84, the Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Bond Act (2006). Over the past five years, the SNC has already distributed approximately \$30 million in Prop. 84 funding. (A listing of project recommendations for the 2010-11 solicitation is included in the meeting [agenda](#).)

The board will tour the historical Wakamatsu site near Placerville, which was recently purchased by the American River Conservancy, with the support of a \$1 million grant from the SNC in 2009. The next stop on the tour will be nearby Marshall Gold Discovery State Historic Park.

The board will also hear an update on the SNC's Sierra Nevada Forest and Community Initiative to assist local communities as they work to ensure public forest lands are managed in a way that will improve forest health while contributing positively to the local Sierra economy. All 22 counties in the SNC region endorsed the SNFCI in 2010.

"The Sierra Nevada Conservancy is focused on the well-being of Sierra residents, our watersheds, wildlife and forests," Branham said. "SNFCI is designed to help us work with those who manage our forests and those who live in the Sierra to find sustainable solutions that will make our forests healthier while creating local jobs and assist in our economic recovery."

The board will be updated on development of the SNC's geotourism efforts, as well as its strategic plan, which will guide the organization's actions over the next three years.

The field trip will begin at the main parking lot behind the Cary House Hotel, 300 Main St. in Placerville, at 1:15 p.m. The board meeting will begin at 9 a.m. Thursday, March 3, at Placerville's Town Hall, located at 549 Main St. The public is welcome to attend both events and should plan on providing their own transportation for the field trip. Additional information about the meeting, the tour and SNFCI can be found at [sierranevada.ca.gov](http://sierranevada.ca.gov)