



Sierra Nevada Conservancy to Consider Guidelines for \$5M Healthy Forests Grant Program

Sun-Star Staff
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The Sierra Nevada Conservancy's (SNC) Governing Board is set to consider proposed guidelines for a \$5 million grant program designed to promote "healthy forests" at its Sept. 8 quarterly meeting in Alturas.

Funding for the grant program will come from Proposition 84 bond funds and will be made available through a competitive grant process aimed at restoring the Sierra Nevada's forests to ecological health. The final draft Grant Guidelines, which reflect changes made as a result of public comment, will be considered for approval by the SNC Board at the meeting, the conservancy said in a news release.

"We are proposing to focus on projects that improve forest health due to the dire need for action," SNC Executive Officer Jim Branham said in the release "Many of our forests are overgrown, with the risk of catastrophic fire presenting a real threat to our Sierra communities, wildlife habitat, watersheds, and drinking water throughout the state."

Eligible projects would include those designed to preserve or improve Sierra Nevada forest health by reducing the risk and impacts of large, damaging fires and/or preserving or restoring ecosystem function in forests and related meadows.

Public agencies, qualifying nonprofit organizations and federally recognized Tribal entities are eligible to apply. The SNC expects to open solicitations for potential grantees Sept. 26.

Potential applicants may obtain more information on how to develop and submit a project at the SNC website at www.SierraNevada.ca.gov after that date.

The board will also consider final approval of the SNC's strategic plan, which will guide the agency's activities for the next three years. Approved areas of focus in this plan include the following:

- Healthy forests;
- Preservation of ranches and agricultural lands;
- Watershed protection and restoration;
- Promotion of sustainable tourism and recreation; and,
- Long-term effectiveness of the SNC.

Members of the board and SNC staff will participate in a field trip Wednesday, Sept. 7, to explore issues and activities relevant to the SNC's mission in the area. Members of the public are invited to both the board meeting and the field trip. The field trip will begin at 1:30 in the main parking lot of the Best Western Trailside Inn located at 343 N. Main Street, Alturas. Participants need to provide their own transportation and lunch.