

**STATE OF CALIFORNIA
SIERRA NEVADA CONSERVANCY**

**Sierra Nevada Conservancy Grant Program
Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control,
River and Coastal Protection Act of 2006 (Proposition 84)**

Applicant: UPPER MERCED RIVER WATERSHED COUNCIL

Project Title: INVASIVE WEED MANAGEMENT IN MERCED RIVER CORRIDOR

Subregion: SOUTH CENTRAL

County: MARIPOSA

SNC Funding: \$192,270.00

Total Project Cost: \$192,269.60

Application Number: 410

Final Score: 98.2

PROJECT SCOPE

This project will remove yellow starthistle and Italian thistle from along the Upper Merced River, approximately 80 acres of sensitive riparian habitat, and help stop the spread of these invasives. The project supports the SNC program goal of protecting, conserving, and restoring the Region's physical, cultural, archaeological, historical, and living resources and is consistent with Proposition 84 by controlling invasives, preventing their spread, and encouraging the native biodiversity to prevail. Major tasks include continuing the work with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) along seven miles of the Briceburg Road and the Wild and Scenic Trail and expanding that work to include two new areas – a two acre stretch along the North Fork and a one acre area near the confluence of the North Fork and the main stem. The project will also include coordinating with the National Parks Service (NPS) and U.S. Forrest Services (USFS) to target infested areas in a 10 mile stretch along Incline Road downstream from El Portal. Crews will manually attack invasives in each of these areas, documenting the effectiveness of treatment through mapping. Additional funding to accomplish this work will be supplied in the form of in-kind goods and services from BLM, NPS, USFS and the NRCS in the total amount of \$24,126.

PROJECT SCHEDULE

DETAILED PROJECT DELIVERABLES	TIMELINE
Six month report submitted to SNC	November 2011
Outreach accomplished/ three articles published (displays, local media, presentations)	Minimum of one each per year (2011/12/13)
Twelve month report submitted to SNC	May 2012
Eighteen month report submitted to SNC	November 2012
Local invasive meetings/trainings attended (8 per year between 5/2011 and 2/2013)	May 2011 – 2013
Treatment areas identified and implementation plan developed, adjusted as needed	May 2011 – March 2013
Tools and equipment purchased	May 2011 – Aug 2013
Twenty-four month report submitted to SNC	May 2013
Crews hired, trained, supervised through collaboration with agencies	May – Aug 2011, 2012, 2013
YST and Italian thistle pulled/mowed using crews	May – Aug 2011, 2012, 2013
Photos, maps, transects (pre/post data) submitted to SNC	October 2011 – 2013
Final Report written and submitted	November 2013
FINAL PAYMENT/FINAL PAYMENT REQUEST	01/1/2014

PROJECT COSTS

PROJECT BUDGET CATEGORIES	TOTAL SNC FUNDING
Project Management Staff Wages	\$27,360.00
Field Management Staff Wages	38,880.00
Staff-Federal & State Deductions	9,936.00
Travel-Mileage (Weed Meetings/Project Sites)	1,794.00
Contracts (CDC and ACE Crews)	75,000.00
Equipment-Hand tools, weed eaters, GPS unit/software	3,000.00
Workers' Comp (Project Management & Field Staff)	6,826.00
Printed Materials	200.00
Outreach (Presenter's Fee & Facility Rental)	600.00
Liability Insurance	3,600.00
Administration (Rent, Utilities, Phone & Internet, Copies, Office Supplies, Bookkeeping & Clerical)	25,074.00
GRAND TOTAL	\$192,270.00

PROJECT SUPPORT LETTERS

- Central Sierra Watershed Committee
- Chowchilla Red Top Resource Conservation District
- Mariposa County Agricultural Commissioner's Office
- Yosemite Area Audubon Society
- Natural Resources Conservation Service
- Bureau of Land Management
- National Park Service
- Sierra National Forest
- Mariposans for the Environment and Responsible Government
- Sierra Nevada Alliance
- Sierra Foothill Conservancy

PROJECT PERFORMANCE MEASURES

There are four Performance Measures common to all grants. In addition, grantees are required to include between one and three project-specific measures. Performance Measures listed here represent those proposed by applicants and may be modified through further discussion with SNC staff.

- Linear Feet of Stream Bank Protected or Restored
- Number of Significant Sites Protected or Preserved
- Acres of Land Improved or Restored

PROJECT SUMMARY

County: Mariposa

Applicant: Upper Merced River Watershed Council

Project Title: Invasive Weed Management in the Merced River Corridor

PROJECT GOAL

The purpose of this project is to remove yellow starthistle and Italian thistle from riparian habitat along the Upper Merced River, approximately 80 acres of sensitive riparian habitat and to stop the spread of these invasives. The project supports the SNC program goal of protecting, conserving, and restoring the region's physical, cultural, archaeological, historical, and living resources and the Proposition 84 goal of restoring rivers, their watersheds and associated lands by controlling invasives, preventing their spread, and encouraging the native biodiversity to prevail.

PROJECT SCOPE

The Upper Merced River Watershed is a highly diverse area that attracts four million visitors each year and supplies 70% of the San Joaquin's agricultural water. Yellow starthistle (YST) and Italian thistle have formed monocultures along the Merced River from Briceburg downriver, up the North Fork of the Merced River, as well as extensively in the El Portal area. Invasive weeds pose one of the greatest ecological threats to California lands and waterways. These monocultures crowd out native vegetation and reduce biodiversity while consuming large amounts of water. They also discourage recreation and public enjoyment.

The desired outcome is that, using crews, 75% of YST and Italian thistle will be cleared from approximately 80 acres in targeted areas by manual techniques during three years of intense, integrated weed management along the Merced River. The work to be funded under this grant is part of a large ongoing invasives project begun in 2003. For the past eight years, the Upper Merced River Watershed Council (UMRWC) has combined forces primarily with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) on an enormously successful invasive removal project along seven miles of the Merced from Briceburg downriver. But effective active control of invasive weeds requires strategies that encompass geographic, not political boundaries!

Building on this long partnership with the BLM, the UMRWC will expand the partnerships with land-management agencies as well as the areas to be treated. Working with the US Forest Service (USFS) botanist from the Sierra National Forest, and the National Park Service (NPS) botanist from Yosemite National Park, the UMRWC will significantly enlarge its areas of active invasive management.

Major tasks will include continuing the work with the BLM along seven miles of the Briceburg Road and the Wild and Scenic Trail and expanding that work to include two new areas – a two acre stretch along the North Fork and a one acre area near the confluence of the North Fork and the main stem. The project will also include coordinating with the NPS and USFS to target infested areas in a 10 mile stretch along Incline Road downstream from El Portal. Crews will manually attack invasives in each of these areas, documenting the effectiveness of treatment through mapping.

Additional funding to accomplish this work will be supplied in the form of in-kind goods and services from BLM - \$13,400; USFS - \$5,250; Natural Resources Conservation Service - \$2,576; NPS - \$2,900.

LETTERS OF SUPPORT

William Haigh, Bureau of Land Management; Niki Nicholas, National Park Service; Joanna M. Clines, US Forest Service; John Brady, Mariposans for the Environment and Responsible Government; Cathi Boze, Mariposa County Agricultural Commissioner; Dawn Afman, Natural Resource Conservation Service; Jeannie Habben, Central Sierra Watershed Committee and Chowchilla Red Top RCD; Kris Randal, Yosemite Area Audubon

SNC PROJECT DELIVERABLES AND SCHEDULE

DETAILED PROJECT DELIVERABLES	TIMELINE
Treatment areas identified and implementation plan developed, adjusted as needed	March 2011 – 2013
Tools and equipment purchased	March 2011 – Aug 2013
Crews hired, trained, supervised through collaboration with agencies	Feb – Aug 2011, 2012, 2013
YST and Italian thistle pulled and/or mowed using contract crews	Feb – Aug 2011, 2012, 2013
Outreach accomplished (displays, local media, presentations) three articles published	Minimum of one each per year
Local invasive meetings/trainings attended	February 2011 – 2013 8 per yr
Photos, maps, transects (pre-and post-data) submitted	October 2011 – 2013
Progress Reports written and submitted	Sept 2011 and every 6 months thereafter
Final Report written and submitted	November 2013

SNC PROJECT COSTS

PROJECT BUDGET CATEGORIES	TOTAL SNC FUNDING
Project Management & Field Management Staff (includes Progress Reports and Final Report)	\$76,176.00
Mileage	\$1,794.00
Invasive Species Control Crews	\$75,000.00
Equipment/Tools	\$3,000.00
Workers' Comp	\$6,825.60
Printed Materials	\$200.00
Outreach/Education	\$600.00
Liability Insurance	\$3,600.00
Administration	\$25,074.00
SNC GRANT TOTAL	\$192,269.60