

**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:** THE NATURE CONSERVANCY  
**Project Title:** RUDNICK RANCH ACQUISITION  
**Subregion:** SOUTH  
**County:** KERN  
**SNC Funding:** \$500,000.00  
**Total Project Cost:** \$11,276,000.00  
**Application Number:** 434  
**Final Score:** 90.3

**PROJECT SCOPE**

This project will acquire approximately 15,000 acres\* of the Rudnick Ranch in the southern Sierra Nevada range. The ranch supports chaparral, grasslands, oak woodlands, and riparian communities in the Middle Kern - Upper Tehachapi - Grapevine watershed. Protection of the ranch eliminates the threat of subdivision and associated water use safeguarding local aquifers and allowing natural ground water recharge and runoff processes to continue. Caliente Creek follows the southern property boundary for approximately 4.3 miles and conservation of the ranch will protect large areas of the creek's watershed and floodplain. Over six miles of Walker Basin Creek occur on the ranch with a majority supporting perennial flow.

The goal is to continue operations as a working ranch ensuring grazing is carried out in a sustainable manner that maintains the important resources. Living resources include a broad matrix of plant and animal species located in the several habitat types found on the ranch. Historic resources include preservation of Baker Grade Road built by Bakersfield's namesake and the ruins of the old tollhouse that remains on the property.

This project is part of a larger joint conservation effort under the umbrella of the Southern Sierra Partnership (SSP), consisting of The Nature Conservancy (TNC), Audubon California, Sequoia Riverlands Trust, Sierra Business Council and others. The SSP was formed to prioritize effective conservation of the Southern Sierra and

Tehachapi Ranges by identifying key properties that ensure the region maintains its character in the face of increased human demands and climate change. The Nature Conservancy is seeking the majority of funding for completing this acquisition from a variety of sources including public and private funders.

### PROJECT SCHEDULE

<b>DETAILED PROJECT DELIVERABLES</b>	<b>TIMELINE</b>
Complete Phase I – Environmental Assessment	July 2011
Complete Funding and Closing Documents	August 2011
Finalize Acquisition	September 2011
Six-month progress report	November 2011
<b>FINAL PAYMENT / FINAL PAYMENT REQUEST</b>	<b>January 2012</b>

### PROJECT COSTS

<b>PROJECT BUDGET CATEGORIES</b>	<b>TOTAL SNC FUNDING</b>
Acquisition fees	\$500,000.00
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>\$500,000.00</b>

### PROJECT SUPPORT LETTERS

- Audubon California
- Ranchers for Responsible Conservation
- Sequoia Riverlands Trust
- Sierra Business Council

### 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 Conserved
- Tons of Carbon Sequestered or Emissions Avoided

\* Assessor Parcel Numbers for the properties included in this project are:

179-150-02, 179-150-19, 179-150-08, 179-150-07,  
179-150-03, 179-150-18, 179-150-06, 179-150-05,  
179-150-04, 179-150-09, 179-150-10, 179-150-11,  
179-150-12, 397-110-09, 397-110-06, 397-110-05,  
179-140-01, 179-140-02, 179-140-03, 179-140-05,  
179-140-04, 197-140-06, 179-140-07, 179-150-16,  
179-150-20, 179-150-21, 179-150-22, 179-150-23,  
179-150-24, 179-150-25, 179-150-26, 179-150-27,  
179-150-28, 179-150-29, 179-150-30, 179-150-31,  
179-150-14, 179-140-13, 179-140-14, 179-140-15,  
179-140-16, 179-140-17, 179-140-11, 179-140-19,  
179-140-18, 179-140-08, 179-170-04, 179-170-05,  
179-160-01, 179-160-02, 179-160-03, 179-260-01,  
179-170-06, 179-160-07, 179-160-06, 179-160-04,  
266-140-02, 266-150-05, 266-150-04, 266-150-03,  
266-160-03, 266-160-01, 266-170-01, 266-170-02,  
266-160-02, 266-170-04, 266-170-03, 266-180-01,  
266-180-02, 179-180-02, 179-180-22

## PROJECT SUMMARY

**County:** Kern

**Applicant:** The Nature Conservancy

**Project Title:** Rudnick Ranch Acquisition

### PROJECT GOAL

The goal of this project is to conserve approximately 15,000 acres of the Rudnick Ranch in the southern Sierra Nevada range. The ranch supports nearly 15,000 acres of intact chaparral, grasslands, oak woodlands, and riparian communities in the Middle Kern - Upper Tehachapi - Grapevine watershed. Land speculation, intensive agriculture, and mining to the east and west threaten the integrity of the ranch and its watersheds. Protection of the ranch eliminates the threat of subdivision and associated water use safeguarding local aquifers and allowing natural ground water recharge and runoff processes to continue. It will also allow recharge of ground water basins in the San Joaquin Valley and protects water quality in the watershed. Caliente Creek follows the southern property boundary for approximately 4.3 miles and protection of the ranch will protect large areas of the creek's watershed and floodplain. Over six miles of Walker Basin Creek occur on the ranch with a majority supporting perennial flow. The Nature Conservancy's (TNC) goal is to acquire the property and continue operations as a working ranch ensuring grazing is carried out in a sustainable manner that maintains the important resources. The project supports many of the SNC goals including preservation of working landscapes (ranching in this case) and conserving the Region's cultural, historical, physical and living resources. Living resources include a broad matrix of plant and animal species located in the several habitat types found on the ranch. Historic resources include preservation of Baker Grade Road built by Bakersfield's namesake and the ruins of the old tollhouse that remains on the property. Rudnick Ranch is also known as "Tollhouse Ranch." The project will also protect Kern County's existing water quality by maintaining nearly 24 square miles of watershed in open permeable ground permanently preserving the function of the natural hydrologic cycle. Other key outcomes of this project include conservation of a key wildlife linkage, climate change adaptation, and building conservation partnerships.

### PROJECT SCOPE

This grant will result in conservation of the nearly 15,000 acre (approximately 23 sq. mile) Rudnick Ranch. It is part of a larger joint conservation effort under the umbrella of the Southern Sierra Partnership (SSP), consisting of TNC, Audubon California, Sequoia Riverlands Trust, and Sierra Business Council. The SSP was formed to accelerate effective conservation of the Southern Sierra and Tehachapi Ranges by identifying key properties that ensure the region maintains its character in the face of increased human demands and climate change. The Tehachapi and southern Sierra Nevada Mountain Ranges present a unique opportunity for conservation as a result of their location, features and intactness. The intersection of these two ranges occurs at the convergence of five ecoregions in a region of steep and diverse topography. Although largely under private ownership, large ranches dominate the landscape resulting in a tremendous opportunity to maintain working landscapes, sustain ecosystem services and conserve the regions physical, cultural, living and historical resources. The Ranges are biologically diverse and provide the only connectivity for the Central and South Coast Ranges to interior ranges. Special focus was given to the protection of riparian

corridors and their floodplains and watersheds to facilitate species movement and allow natural ground water recharge and runoff processes to continue by minimizing future channelization and flood protection infrastructure.

The SSP has established a five year goal to conserve 275,000 acres of important conservation lands in the southern Sierra Nevada and Tehachapi mountains. These lands have been selected for their contribution to protecting aquatic and riparian habitats, maintaining connectivity across elevational gradients, provision of refugia and expansion areas needed to accommodate climate change sensitive species and, to maintain the approximately 50 mile linkage from the Sierra Nevada to the South and Central Coast Ecoregions. Rudnick Ranch is a key component of this five year goal.

Performance Measures applicable to the project are the linear feet of stream bank protected; the number of special significance sites protected or preserved and acres of land conserved.

TNC has a signed letter of intent for a one-year option to purchase the Ranch in fee for \$11,250,000. The formal option agreement is currently being circulated for signature by the buyer and seller. TNC intends to eventually transfer fee title to a conservation buyer and retain a conservation easement. In the interim we may lease the property to a rancher, possibly to the seller, and sell the fee interest with a conservation easement to a conservation buyer. The remaining project costs will be provided through public and private grants.

#### LETTERS OF SUPPORT

Audubon California  
Ranchers for Responsible Conservation  
Sequoia Riverlands Trust  
Sierra Business Council

Reed Tollefson  
Emmy Cattani  
R. Scott Spear  
Steve Frisch

#### SNC PROJECT DELIVERABLES AND SCHEDULE

DETAILED PROJECT DELIVERABLES	TIMELINE
INCLUDE SPECIFIC TASKS IDENTIFIED IN SCOPE AND ALL REPORTS, ETC.	ASSUME START DATE 60 DAYS AFTER SNC BOARD AUTHORIZATION
Phase 1 Environmental Assessment	July 2011
Complete funding and closing conditions	August 2011
Acquire property	September 2011
Six month progress report	March 2012
Final report	September 2012

#### SNC PROJECT COSTS

PROJECT BUDGET CATEGORIES	TOTAL SNC FUNDING
Capital Costs	\$1,000,000
<b>SNC GRANT TOTAL</b>	<b>\$1,000,000</b>