

**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:** MARIPOSA PUBLIC UTILITY DISTRICT  
**Project Title:** STOCKTON CREEK PRESERVE AND TRAIL  
**Subregion:** SOUTH CENTRAL  
**County:** MARIPOSA  
**SNC Funding:** \$1,000,000.00  
**Total Project Cost:** \$1,088,888.00  
**Application Number:** 443  
**Final Score:** 95.3

**PROJECT SCOPE**

This project will allow the Mariposa Public Utility District (MPUD) to acquire a critical portion of the Stockton Creek watershed. Stockton Creek is a seasonal stream located in the Sierra foothills within Mariposa County, approximately one mile northeast of the town of Mariposa. Located within the watershed is the Stockton Creek dam and reservoir built in 1950 to supply water to the community of Mariposa. The Stockton Creek reservoir is still the primary source of drinking water for MPUD. The watershed itself is an important natural and recreational resource for the community.

The health of the Stockton Creek is integral to the protection of the public water supply. The proposed project is consistent with Proposition 84 goals and objectives, as well as a wide range of SNC goals. It will create a much-needed recreational outlet for the community and make Mariposa a more attractive destination to visitors. The vegetation management proposed will restore and maintain the natural condition of the project area. The project will also reduce the risk of natural disasters, such as wildfire, as this area is in great need of fuel modification, which is part of the management proposed for the acquisition area. Improved water quality will be realized with initial project fuel modifications and continued vegetation management. This project involves the following APNs: # 012-011-001; # 012-150-054; # 012-150-031; and a portion of # 012-150-056. Estimated total amount of resources leveraged for this project is \$88,888.

## PROJECT SCHEDULE

DETAILED PROJECT DELIVERABLES	TIMELINE
Complete property survey, property & easement descriptions	August 2011
Complete Management Plan	August 2011
Complete lot line adjustments	November 2011
Submit six month report to SNC	November 2011
Final agreement with property owner, title search, escrow and title transfer	January 2012
MPUD Board establish project policies	February 2012
Complete trail development and construction; Implement road Access Improvements and erosion control measures	April – June 2012
Submit twelve month report to SNC	May 2012
Vegetation survey & forester recommendations/ Fire hazard/fuel modification	July-September 2012
Boundary signs erected	October 2012
Trailhead stations installation	November 2012
Submit 18 month report to SNC	November 2012
Public Notification	December 2012
Agency & public project introduction	February 2013
Submit Final Report to SNC	April 2013
<b>FINAL PAYMENT/FINAL PAYMENT REQUEST</b>	<b>June 1, 2013</b>

## PROJECT COSTS

PROJECT BUDGET CATEGORIES	TOTAL SNC FUNDING
Property Purchase in fee	\$1,000,000.00
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>\$1,000,000.00</b>

## PROJECT SUPPORT LETTERS

- Sierra Business Council
- Sierra Foothill Conservancy
- CAL FIRE
- Mariposa County Board of Supervisors
- Yosemite Area Audubon Society
- Mariposans For The Environment And Responsible Government
- California Department of Public Health

## **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 New Recreation Access Points
- Number of Significant Sites Protected or Preserved
- Acres of Land Conserved
- Acre Feet per Annum of Water Supply Conserved or Enhanced
- Feet of Trail/Path Constructed or Improved
- Number of Collaboratively Developed Plans and Assessments

## **6. PROPOSED STOCKTON CREEK PRESERVE AND TRAIL SUMMARY**

The Mariposa Public Unity District (MPUD) is seeking funding from Sierra Nevada Conservancy through the Proposition 84 Grant Program for the fee title acquisition of a critical portion of the Stockton Creek Watershed. Stockton Creek is a seasonal stream located in the Sierra foothills within Mariposa County, approximately one mile northeast of the town of Mariposa. The creek flows from approximately November to June. Elevations of the watershed start at a high point of 3650' to the lowest point of 1770' at the confluence of Mariposa Creek over a distance of about six miles. The Mariposa Creek is a tributary to the San Joaquin river.

Located within the watershed is the Stockton Creek dam and reservoir built in 1950 to supply water to the community of Mariposa. The Stockton Creek reservoir is still the primary source of drinking water for MPUD. The watershed itself is an important natural resource for the community. The land area within the watershed is primarily undeveloped with some residential development on larger parcels (greater than 20 acres). A large percentage of the watershed is made up of larger tracts of land which until recently were under the ownership of a few individuals.

There are two very large tracts of land within the Stockton Creek watershed for which MPUD and conservation partners have previously sought conservation strategies in the 1990's for approximately 2300 acres Land then owned by a single entity. The new owner is very supportive of a conservancy project for this area and is entering into an option agreement to sell the property for this purpose The land owner does wish to sell the property and has recently been contacted by several buyers who are interested in purchasing the property for development. The zoning and proximity of the land to the town of Mariposa make the property ideal for residential and like commercial development.

The land area proposed for this acquisition has an immediate need for some management and mitigation of extensive damage to the native vegetation. In 2000 the property owner proceeded with a vegetation management project which he thought would reduce wildfire hazard and produce an "open, park-like appearance". Basically, the project included poisoning of live oak on approximately 800 acres of land, then the dead trees were to be harvested for firewood and the left over brush was to be stacked and burned. Unfortunately, the first phase (tree poisoning) was all that was done. Now the wildfire and erosion hazards are far greater than before. The attached photos show the extent of damage from this incomplete project.

A wild land fire in 2004 burned from the east side of the Mariposa Town area through the Stockton Creek watershed. This incident was a clear reminder for the importance of watershed management. The runoff period after the fire resulted in more than double the amount of "naturally" occurring contaminants in the town water supply. As an example the total organic carbon (a precursor to disinfection byproducts which are considered a health risk) increased to background levels immediately after the 2004 fire

MPUD established in 1947 has an obvious interest in maintaining the Stockton Creek watershed in its natural state. MPUD owns and operates the Stockton Creek dam and reservoir. In addition to collecting and storing water runoff from the local watershed, the Stockton Creek reservoir is an important component to the Saxon Creek water project which provides for a small diversion of water from the Merced River. It is important that the integrity of the Stockton Creek watershed be maintained for the long term to protect the public water supply

The concept of the conservancy project will include the consideration of the following tasks and management:

Vegetation, Fire Hazard, Erosion Control:

Complete the vegetation management project started by the previous land owner (now deceased). Work with the California Dept. of Forestry and Fire Protection (Cal-fire) to plan and carry out the removal of the dead vegetation. Calif. Dept. of Corrections (CDC) crews under direction of Cal-Fire, can be utilized to actually perform the field work for this task. The local USDA Soil Conservation Service staff will assist in the design and implementation of erosion control measures. Cal-fire is also willing to provide staff qualified in forest management and fire safe planning.

Historic Archaeological Resources

In 1991 MPUD commissioned a Cultural Resource investigation of the then proposed Saxon Creek Project pipe line. Portions of the pipe line are within the Stockton Creek watershed. The investigation located three archaeological and historic resource sites that are within the area of the proposed Stockton Creek Conservancy project area. Although the exact locations of the sites are confidential, MPUD maintains the initial survey information and will be able to better provide for the protection of these historic sites.

Recreation:

Even though the community of Mariposa is located in the Sierra foothills, there are no natural areas designated for public recreational use nearby. Many people currently walk or jog along a water line easement between the Stockton Creek dam and the water treatment facility. This practice is technically a trespass. MPUD proposes to facilitate a volunteer watershed group to prepare and maintain hiking trails in the conservancy area. Again the CDC/Cal-Fire crews can be utilized to construct some of the trails. Special trails for mountain bike use will be considered. It is not intended that any area will be open to motorized recreational vehicles.

At this time, MPUD is the lead agency for the proposed project. The District is consulting with Sierra Foothill Conservancy to investigate the feasibility of a conservancy project in the Stockton Creek watershed. Now is the time to pursue the long term protection of this watershed while the landowners are willing to sell the land for conservation. In the alternative, the land may be developed with roads, structures, on-site septic systems and concentrated farm animal pens. If conservation measures are implemented early the benefits will include:

- Recreation such as hiking and biking
- Watershed enhancement and reversal of existing watershed degrading projects
- Protection of public water supply as well as cost savings in future treatment of public water supplies
- The watershed is in the prime elevation zone for the valley elderberry long horn beetle a protected species
- Protection of identified historic archaeological sites.
- Fire hazard mitigation
- Preserve open space