

Sierra Nevada Conservancy-Progress Report

**Sierra Nevada Conservancy Grant Program
Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control
River and Coastal Protection Act of 2008 (Proposition 84)**

Grantee Name: Student Conservation Association

Project title: Sierra Nevada Wilderness and Trails Project

SNC Reference Number: SNC 070275 **Submittal Date:** 1/24/09

Report Preparer: Jay Watson **Phone #:** 510-832-1966

Check one:

6-Month Progress Report
 Final Report

<p>6-Month Progress Reports should reflect the previous six months. Final Reports should reflect the entire grant period.</p>

A. Progress Report Summary: (Please provide a general description of work completed during this reporting period.)

Four SCA high school volunteer Conservation Crews were deployed to the Inyo, Sierra, and Stanislaus National Forests. They served for three weeks and undertook trail maintenance and wilderness restoration projects in the Golden Trout, John Muir, and Carson-Iceberg Wilderness Areas. Each crew consisted of two paid, experienced crew leaders and 6 crew members.

B. Deliverables or Outcomes completed during this Reporting Period or Milestones Achieved: (Include specific information, such as public meetings held, agency participation, partnerships developed, or acres mapped, treated or restored.)

See Section II.

C. Challenges or Opportunities Encountered: (Please describe what has worked and what hasn't; include any solutions you initiated to resolve problems. If your project is not on schedule, please explain why here.)

The biggest challenge that presented itself was one crew would have been better served if it was assigned for four weeks rather than three weeks due to the sophisticated nature of the trail work they were face with -- mostly stone and rock work that took a bit more time for the crew members to familiarize themselves with.

D. Unanticipated Successes Achieved: (Please describe any additional successes beyond completing scheduled tasks or meeting scheduled milestones.)

E. Compare Actual Costs to Budgeted Costs: (Please refer to your grant agreement to list your deliverables/budget categories and budgeted costs compared to actual costs incurred during this reporting period in the table below.)

PROJECT BUDGET CATEGORIES	Budgeted SNC Dollars	Actual Dollars
Crew Leader Travel	\$3,000	\$4,620
Crew Leader Salaries/Benefits	\$15,500	\$9,073
Supplies & Equipment (Non-food)	\$2,000	\$4,043
Project vehicles, gas	\$9,000	\$7,669
Purchase food		\$0
Crew Member travel assistance	\$3,000	\$236
Packer Support	\$4,000	\$11,080
Project support, field visits, evaluation, reporting	\$8,000	\$7,000
Project Administration	\$5,500	\$5,000
Total Costs	\$50,000	\$48,721

Explanation: (if needed)

Some budget categories were under budgeted, particularly pack station support, while others were over-estimated, such as crew leader salaries.

F. Were there any other relevant materials produced under the terms of this Agreement that are not a part of the budgeted deliverables? If so, please attach copies. (Include digital photos, maps, media coverage of project, or other work products.)

The Sonora Union-Democrat published a story about the SCA trail crew. (Copy attached).

G. Next Steps: (Work anticipated in the next 6 months, including location and timing of any scheduled events related to the project.)

Project is fully completed. SCA will again deploy 4-5 high school wilderness/trail crews to the Inyo, Sierra, and Stanislaus National Forests in the summer of 2009 using funding sources other than the SNC.

Please Complete this Section for FINAL Report ONLY

Resources Leveraged: (What kind and amount of resources – funding or in-kind – outside of the SNC were you able to leverage, and how?)

A National Forest Foundation grant of \$20,000 was secured to help support the project. SCA volunteers accomplished 4,480 volunteer conservation service hours, valued at \$87,404 using current Independent Sector valuations. In-kind pack station support was provided by the Inyo National Forest valued at approximately \$4,000.

Capacity-Building Results and Collaboration and Cooperation with Stakeholders: (What partnerships did you initiate or strengthen as a result of this project? How did they affect the project outcome? If applicable, how did this grant increase your organization's capacity? What is your plan to sustain this increase?)

While SCA has worked with all the three forests at the college level, as a result of the project we have now established a partnership at the high school level as well. Moreover, we established SCA as a trusted client of several commercial pack stations and initiated a partnership with the Backcountry Horseman of California. SCA also developed an added capacity for local area recruiting in California, which will be important in future projects as well.

We will maintain high school crews in the Sierra during the summer of 2009 with grant funding from the National Forest Foundation and the Resources Legacy Fund Foundation.

Description of Project Accomplishments:

1. How did the Project succeed in accomplishing its intent?

By almost all measure of success, the Sierra Nevada Wilderness and Trails Project was a success. The Forest Service was delighted with the service/work that was accomplished, the crew members had challenging, yet wonderful experiences, close to 5,000 hours of volunteer service was accomplished, with no injuries sustained.

Crew members were successfully recruited from the Bay Area, Los Angeles, the Central Valley, and the Sierra Nevada.

All participating forests have requested SCA crews to return in the summer of 2009.

2. Describe any follow-on or indirect benefits resulting from the Project.

This was the first time the Inyo, Stanislaus, or Sierra National Forests had ever worked with SCA High School crews. Initial under-estimations of SCA crew capabilities were overcome, much to the surprise of individual Forest Service staff. As a result, each forest wants an SCA high school crew back in the summer of 2009.

3. Describe any significant experiences, unanticipated results or noteworthy events that create a “wow” factor.

Securing the interest of a Sierra Nevada-based newspaper in the project and laying the groundwork for additional coverage in the future.

4. Describe any Lessons Learned.

We under-estimated the cost of pack station support. The remoteness of some of the work sites added to the costs of this essential support service. Also, in one case, given the complexity of the rock work involved, a four-week crew would have worked better than a two-week crew. However, that must be balanced with a real demand for two-week crews from high school students, given other summer interests and commitments.

5. How do you intend to share the results of your work on this project?

We have had follow up meetings with each forest and are working to spread the word throughout the region in face-to-face meetings with other forests in the hopes of increasing number of crews in 2009. SCA staff have also made presentations about the program at region-wide meetings of the U.S. Forest Service.

SNC-approved Performance Measures: (Please list each Performance Measure for your Project, as identified in your Grant Agreement, and the results/outcomes.)

Performance Measure #1. Accomplish 5,376 total hours of volunteer service valued at \$104,885

Result: Challenging hikes to selected work sites (grade & altitude) required a bit longer to negotiate. Additionally, one crew wound up as a two-week crew, rather than a 4-week crew. As a result, 4,480 hours of volunteer service was accomplished, valued at \$87,404.

Performance Measure #2. Remove brush and loose rocks from 25 miles of trail on the Inyo National Forest. Install 10 water bars/drainage dips. Remove 5 campsites too close to creeks/lakes.

Result: Less trail brushing than expected, about 8 miles were brushed and rocked. 6 water bars built/rebuilt. 1 campsite removed. 5 blow downs removed with crosscut saw.

Performance Measure #3. Repair/rebuild 2 stock exclusion split rail fences approximately ½ mile in length on Inyo NF to protect meadows and water quality

Result: Stock exclusion fences built, 40 fence dug and set posts and fencing installed.

Performance Measure #4. Remove and rehabilitate 2.5 miles of unwanted old Golden Trout Lakes Trail on Sierra NF. Reduce erosion of soil into creek.

Result: Trail successfully removed and rehabbed.

Performance Measure #5. Repair and stabilize a section of the L Lake Trail that is deeply (3+ feet in some locations) incised and is currently causing significant erosion and associated resource damage. This section of trail is located between Elba Lake and the bottom of French Canyon and is approximately 0.75 miles in length.

Result: While just ¾ mile in length, the repair and stabilization of the L Lake Trail was technically and physically challenging due to extensive rock work that was needed. Deep trail incisions were repaired and erosion controlled along this sensitive section of trail.

Performance Measure #6. Brush and rock 3 miles of trail on Stanislaus NF. Perform heavy maintenance and erosion control on 1,000 feet of trail. Improve access for hikers and equestrians.

Result: Exceeded Performance Measure. Approximately 2 miles of trail brushed. Heavy maintenance performed on 1,000 feet of County Line Trail. 10 water dips, 10 rock check steps built to control runoff and protect water quality. 1, 20-foot rock wall constructed support trail. 22 of rock cribbing installed to stabilize soils. 4 blow downs removed using cross cut saw.