

Sierra Nevada Conservancy-Final 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: Feather River Land Trust

Project title: Learning Landscapes Project

SNC Reference Number: Grant Agreement #G0770018; Application # SNC 070299

Submittal Date: 02/22/2011

Report Preparer: Jason Moghaddas

Phone#: (530) 284-7376

Check one:

6-Month Progress Report
 Final Report

6-Month Progress Reports should reflect the previous six months. **Final Reports** should reflect the entire grant period.

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

This progress report on behalf of the Feather River Land Trust for the Learning Landscapes Project represents activity occurring over the entire grant period (May 7th, 2008- December 31st, 2010). While California's bond freeze did dampen our ability to get some work completed during this period, we were able to complete on-going pre-acquisition work, including the signing of 10 MOU's allowing educational use on priority Learning Landscape properties, completion of a conservation easement on the Taylorsville Elementary Learning Landscape at the Pearce Ranch, near completion of the fee title purchase of the Quincy Learning Landscape from Rick Leonhardt, and extensive planning and community contacts which will lead to the continued success of FRLT's Learning Landscape Program. Several additional MOU's are in progress and our program has expanded to Westwood area schools. In addition, *over \$230,000* in additional private, foundation, and public funds were leveraged for the Learning Landscape program over the entire grant period.

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.)

The Feather River Land Trust was able to complete on-going pre-acquisition work, including the signing of 10 MOU's allowing educational use on priority Learning

Landscape properties, completion of a conservation easement on the Taylorsville Elementary Learning Landscape at the Pearce Ranch, near completion of the fee title purchase of the Quincy Learning Landscape from Rick Leonhardt, and extensive planning and community contacts which will lead to the continued success of FRLT's Learning Landscape Program.

- A completed Conservation Easement on the Pearce Ranch in Indian Valley, which allows FRLT to use the property for educational use as part of its Learning Landscapes Program.
- Easement process and land acquisition work occurred on the Leonhardt Ranch property in Quincy. Rick and Tiffany Leonhardt are supportive landowners who worked closely with FRLT in 2010 to move the first LL site toward "in perpetuity" conservation. Expected closing dates in 2011.
- Over the grant period, MOUs or other formal agreements which grant educational access were made for the following properties and landowner partners:
 - **Collins Trail** – Collins Pine Company - Chester
 - **Chester Meadows** – Pacific Gas & Electric Company - Chester
 - **Leonhardt Ranch** – Rick & Tiffany Leonhardt Family - Quincy
 - **Mill Creek** – Plumas Unified School District - Quincy
 - **Boyle's Ravine** – Quincy Community Services District - Quincy
 - **Tiger Woods** – Plumas Unified School District - Portola
 - **Kids Creek Forest/Delleker T** – United States Forest Service - Portola
 - **Wildcat Creek** - City of Portola - Portola
 - **Greenville Cemetery Forest** – Greenville Cemetery District - Greenville
 - **Wolf Creek at Evergreen** – Yvonne/John Papenhausen - Greenville
- **Wolf Creek** –(Daniel & Carol Dunham, owners) in Greenville, and **Smithneck Creek** (Anne Chadwick, owner) in Loyalton are still in active process. Positive interaction but no formal agreement/MOU yet in place.
- Westwood schools (Westwood High School and Fletcher Walker Elementary) have begun the process of identifying and initiating the conservation process.
- Recent feedback at Quincy High School has initiated the reconsideration of the **Q Hill -Lillibridge** property, which includes the large "Q" above Quincy High School.

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.)

Securing MOU's on many of the properties has been relatively straightforward with the greatest concern being landowner liability. The Plumas Unified School District has named individual landowners in its insurance policy to help alleviate this concern. Securing conservation easements has been a challenge over the grant period as property values funding has become less certain and more competitive. While our initial aspirations were to permanently conserve 12 properties via fee title or conservation easements, the reality of funding lead to a conservation easement on 1 property, fee title acquisition pending for 1 property (Quincy Learning Landscape), with MOU's granted

for educational access granted on 10 additional properties. Overall, we have found it difficult to compete for funds for conservation easements on relatively small (<25 acres) properties. We do believe that the MOU's provide the necessary protection for students and landowners to proceed with educational use of those properties, and they provide a gateway for dialog with landowners for more permanent protection in the future. As of this report, none of the properties with MOU's are threatened by sale or development.

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

We have had excellent collaborative and financial support from both private landowners, private donors, other funders, and the Plumas Unified School District for this program. Our teacher trainings have been well attended and students are already using the sites for outdoor education, restoration activities, and as centers for outdoor learning.

Over the grant period, the Learning Landscapes program directly raised over \$230,000 in additional resources for student and teacher materials, teacher training, outdoor classroom development, and fee title acquisition. This funding was derived from a wide range of sources, including the Pacific Forest and Watershed Lands Stewardship Council Infrastructure Fund (\$90,275), the National Fish and Wildlife Federation 5 Star Restoration Grant (\$25,000), the Plumas County Resource Advisory Committee (\$22,000) in Partnership with the Feather River Coordinated Resource Management Group, and several private donors (\$95,000).

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
Pre-acquisition work	\$21,600	\$21,664
Title, deed restriction/easement	\$10,000	\$10,176.33
Baseline/environmental assessments	\$21,600	\$21,713.62
Travel and lodging	\$2,000	\$1,308.20
Materials	\$1,000	\$955.58
Admin costs	\$5,620	\$6,002
GRAND TOTAL	\$61,820	\$61,819.73

Explanation: (if needed):

Our actual versus budgeted costs were slightly higher (0.3-6.8%) for the categories "Pre-acquisitions work", "Title/deed/restriction/easement" and "Administrative". These higher costs were offset by lower overall travel, lodging, and materials costs. Given the complexity of this project, number of properties involved,

number of staff involved, and the impact of the state bond freeze, we feel the budget versus actual expenses are reasonable.

- F. Do you have information to report on the project-specific Performance Measures for your project?** (If so, please list the Performance Measures below and describe your progress.)

Please last see section in "Final Report" for a project-specific Performance Measure reporting.

- G. 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.)

See attached watershed map of the Feather River (Appendix 1). This map was custom made for FRLT and printed and distributed to local students and teachers.

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

The Feather River Land Trust intends to continue to build its Learning Landscapes Program through continued conservation work with landowners, partnerships with local schools, and on-going student and teacher trainings and "After School Teacher Outings".

Throughout the 2010 calendar year a group of 15 selected 7th-12th grade teachers met regularly for training and planning. This group acts as a leadership team for the development of LL efforts. This corps of teachers will continue to meet into 2011 in anticipation of the Teaching from the Land Restoration and Stewardship Workshop August 3-5.

Please Complete this Section for FINAL Report ONLY

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?)

- There were many regular and miscellaneous calls and conversations with established and prospective partners. Besides those bulleted below and of course our landowner partners (see Land Conservation- section 5), we initiated or deepened collaboration with Collins Pine Lumber Company (materials), Jim Crane Consulting, Sierra Nevada Journeys at Grizzly Creek Ranch, Feather River RCD, Sierra Valley RCD, various parent groups, Marquette Construction, Feather River rentals, City of Portola, Plumas County Assessors Office, Folchi's Rock Garden, USFS Mt Hough RD and Mohawk RD, Women's Mountain Passages, Feather River Materials,
- The Plumas Unified School District is such an obvious collaborator but the richness of this partnership deserves to be underscored. The collaboration occurs at all levels, from board to administration to teachers to maintenance. In particular, the PUSD Superintendent of Schools, Glenn Harris, has met regularly to stay up to date on Learning Landscapes efforts. His support includes providing strong letters of support for all 2010 grant proposals, making school board reports on behalf of LL as part of his personal report and direct advocacy.
- The Feather River CRM, regional meadow and riparian restoration experts, are collaborating for Learning Landscapes in two different ways. First, the FRCRM is providing significant in-kind support for our Teaching from the Land Stewardship & Restoration Training during the summer 2011. This collaboration was forged during the spring and summer of 2010. Second, the FRCRM RAC proposal and project titled, Students as Stewards, has its environmental service learning activities all directed toward our Learning Landscapes Sites.
- SB70/Career Technical Education (CTE) planning with Michelle Fulton at FRC for Teaching from the Land support. Mapped out Spring 2011 collaboration for 7-12 grade teachers.
- Working closely with Sierra Buttes Trail Stewardship to provide support for all trail design and construction as well as senior project mentoring (4 senior projects). Planning to implement the CRC Elementary trail in December.
- Brett Marty, a local architect and trail aficionado worked to develop the first set of Learning Landscapes infrastructure site plans. His designs were reviewed and approved by PUSD Maintenance, Superintendent Glenn Harris, and the PUSD School Board. This assistance led to the piloted approval of the first Learning Landscape Outdoor Classroom at C Roy Carmichael Elementary School in Portola.
- As mentioned in the previous section, Rob Wade (FRLT Learning Landscapes Coordinator) represented integration of Learning Landscapes into Storrie Fire Restoration collaboration during the planning process between PUSD and the

Plumas & Lassen National Forests. The USFS/PUSD Participating Agreement was approved by the PUSD School Board at its December board meeting. The result is fully institutionalized support of Learning Landscapes afterschool teacher outings by USFS through 2020.

Description of Project Accomplishments:

1. Most Significant Accomplishment

Describe in one concise, well-written paragraph, the most significant accomplishment that resulted from this grant.

The Learning Landscapes program has provided the opportunity for landowners, teachers, students, and other local organizations to work together towards providing local kids with improved access to outdoor learning spaces. Access to these spaces allows students to enhance their learning through direct observation of ecosystems in the field and the plants and animals that inhabit them. This is a significant jump in experiential education from standard classroom teaching.

2. WOW Factor

If applicable, please describe anything that happened as a result of the project or during the project that is particularly impressive.

Extensive community, teacher, landowner, and donor support for the Learning Landscapes program has insured its effectiveness and durability over time for students well into the future.

3. Design and Implementation

When considering the design and implementation of this project, what lessons did you learn that might help other grantees implement similar work?

Securing MOU's on many of the properties has been relatively straightforward with the greatest concern being landowner liability. The Plumas Unified School District has named individual landowners in its insurance policy to help alleviate this concern. Securing conservation easements has been a challenge over the grant period as property values funding has become less certain and more competitive. While our initial aspirations were to permanently conserve 12 properties via fee title or conservation easements, the reality of funding lead to a conservation easement on 1 property, fee title acquisition pending for 1 property (Quincy Learning Landscape), with MOU's granted for educational access granted on 10 additional properties. Overall, we have found it difficult to compete for funds for conservation easements on relatively small (<25 acres) properties. We do believe that the MOU's provide the necessary protection for students and landowners to proceed with educational use of those properties, and they provide a gateway for dialog with landowners for more permanent protection in the future. As of this report, none of the properties with MOU's are threatened by sale or development.

4. Indirect Impact

Please describe any indirect benefits of the project such as information that has been developed as a result of the project is being used by several other organizations to improve decision-making, or a conservation easement funded by this grant that

encouraged other landowners in the area to have conservation easements on their property.

The Learning Landscapes Program has stimulated a whole new area of growth and collaboration for land based education in Plumas County. We have seen interest in the program from students, teachers, PUSD leadership, parents, landowners, and volunteers. Included in this report is our spring 2011 "After School Teacher Outings" schedule. These outings support teachers to move toward greater curriculum integration with local natural resources and provide local students with a more meaningful and relevant education.

5. Collaboration and Conflict Resolution

If you worked in collaboration or cooperation with other organizations or institutions, describe those arrangements and their importance to the project. Also, describe if you encountered conflict in the project and how you dealt with it, or if there was conflict avoided as a result of the project.

Learning Landscapes, as a school based program has received zero negative press or interactions. This includes one particular phone call with local who usually has concerns about issues in several areas-on a phone call, he had only one question about LL and then went on to commend us for all of our hard work for the kids and thoughtful program design. By integrating benefit for local kids as a central focus in our broad vision for this program, we have created true neutral ground for land conservation and possibly a change of mind for many.

6. Capacity-Building

SNC is interested in both the capacity of your organization, as well as local and regional capacity. Please describe the overall health of your organization including areas in need of assistance. SNC is interested in the strength and involvement of your board, significant changes to your staff, size and involvement of membership. In addition, describe how your project improved capabilities of partners, or the larger community.

We have had excellent collaborative and financial support from both private landowners, private donors, other funders, and the Plumas Unified School District for this program. Our teacher trainings have been well attended and students are already using the sites for outdoor education, restoration activities, and as centers for outdoor learning.

Over the grant period, the Learning Landscapes program directly raised over \$230,000 in additional resources for student and teacher materials, teacher training, outdoor classroom development, and fee title acquisition. This funding was derived from a wide range of sources, including the Pacific Forest and Watershed Lands Stewardship Council Infrastructure Fund (\$90,275), the National Fish and Wildlife Federation 5 Star Restoration Grant (\$25,000), the Plumas County Resource Advisory

Committee (\$22,000) in Partnership with the Feather River Coordinated Resource Management Group, and several private donors (\$95,000).

7. Challenges

Did the project face internal or external challenges? How were they addressed? Describe each challenge and any actions that you took to address it. Was there something that SNC did or could have done to assist you? Did you have to change any of your key objectives in response to conditions “on the ground”?

Securing MOU's on many of the properties has been relatively straightforward with the greatest concern being landowner liability. The Plumas Unified School District has named individual landowners in its insurance policy to help alleviate this concern. Securing conservation easements has been a challenge over the grant period as property values funding has become less certain and more competitive. While our initial aspirations were to permanently conserve 12 properties via fee title or conservation easements, the reality of funding lead to a conservation easement on 1 property, fee title acquisition pending for 1 property (Quincy Learning Landscape), with MOU's granted for educational access granted on 10 additional properties. Overall, we have found it difficult to compete for funds for conservation easements on relatively small (<25 acres) properties. We do believe that the MOU's provide the necessary protection for students and landowners to proceed with educational use of those properties, and they provide a gateway for dialog with landowners for more permanent protection in the future. As of this report, none of the properties with MOU's are threatened by sale or development.

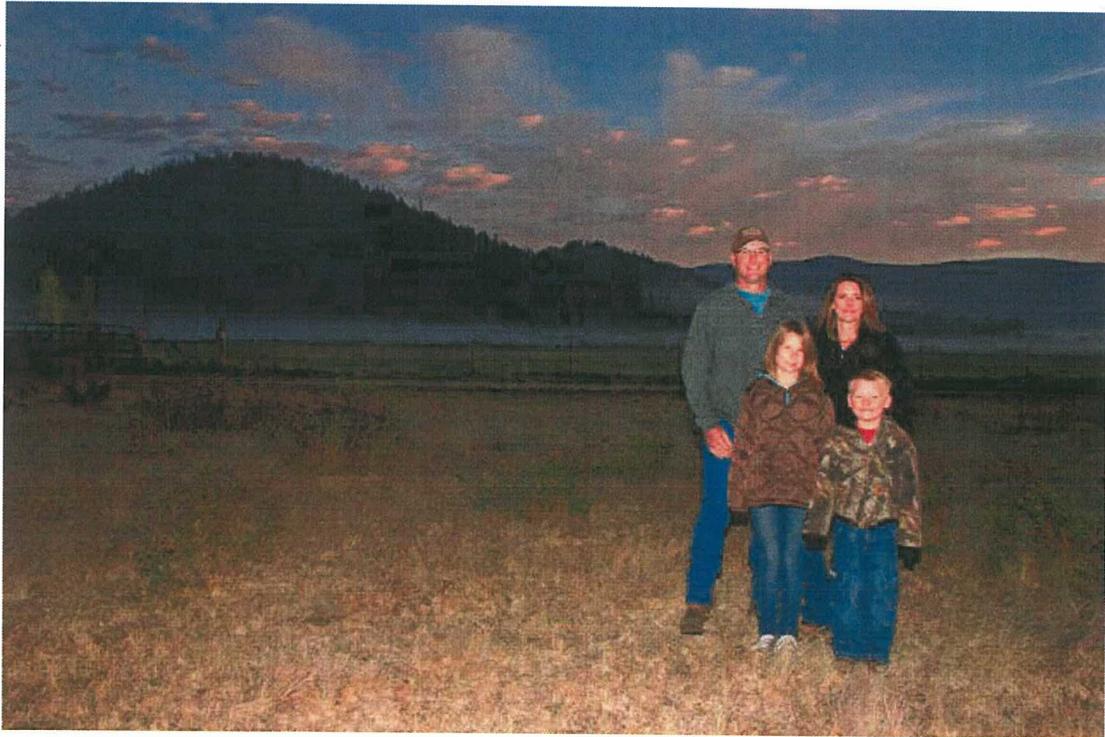
8. Photographs

Grantees are strongly encouraged to submit photos, slides or digital images whenever possible. These images will be used for SNC publications such as annual reports or on the website. Please make sure you clearly identify location, activity, and your project with each submitted image. Images will be credited to the submitting organization, unless specified otherwise.

Mill Creek sign dedication (Below): Children at Pioneer Elementary School in Quincy celebrate the dedication of their Mill Creek Learning Landscape



Leonhardt Family, by Shannon Morrow (Below): Landowners Rick and Tiffany Leonhardt are dedicated to creating an ongoing Learning Landscape for Quincy Jr/Sr High, and scenic open space for the Quincy community.



2010 Teaching From the Land Workshop (Below): Teaching from the Land participants were supported with workshop stipends, field science resources, new

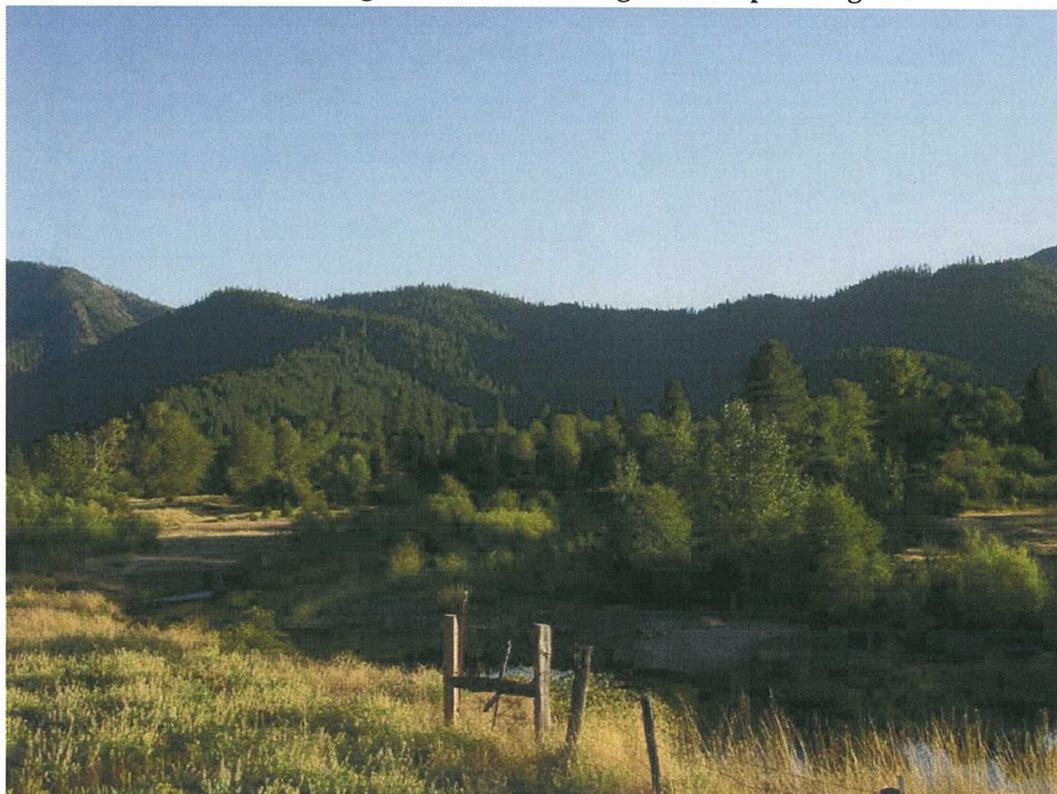
localized curricular materials, hands-on activities, training in Place-based Education, Natural Resource Career Path exploration, and some of the best resource professionals in the region. Teachers also received classroom field teaching kits (lower right)



Leonhardt Ranch Learning Landscape (Below):7th Graders at Quincy Jr/Sr. High work to eradicate yellow star thistle on the Leonhardt Ranch Learning Landscape



Pearce Ranch (Below): The riparian area of the Pearce Ranch is now available for educational use through FRLT's Learning Landscapes Program



9. Post Grant Plans

What are the post-grant plans for the project if it does not conclude with the grant? Include a description of the following (if applicable): (1) Changes in operations or scope; (2) Replication or use of findings; (3) Names of other organizations you expect to involve; (4) Plans to support the project financially, and; (5) Communication plans?

Our post grant plans include:

- Continued work with local landowners to make lands available for educational use, and to use additional conservation tools (MOU's, conservation easements, and fee title acquisitions) for priority properties adjacent to local schools.
- Implementation of our "After School Teacher Outings" as described in the appendix
- Continue work on our own properties to enhance public access, interpretive signage, and use for workshops and public events that promote education about the ecosystems and land use history of these lands.

10. Post Grant Contact

Who can be contacted a few years from now to follow up on the project? Please provide name and contact information.

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Robert Jordan Wade
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Projects Coordinator, Outdoor-Environment-Watershed Education
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SNC-approved Performance Measures: (Please list each Performance Measure for your Project, as identified in your Grant Agreement, and the results/outcomes.)

1. Resources Leveraged for the Sierra Nevada-

- a) Resources leveraged to complete this project (matching funds, in kind contributions, etc):

\$570,000 from the Sierra Nevada Conservancy, Northern Sierra Partnership, and private donors to purchase a conservation easement on the Pearce Ranch, which is a Learning Landscape Property for the Taylorsville area.

- b) Resources leveraged as a result of this project

Over the grant period, the Learning Landscapes program directly raised over \$230,000 in additional resources for student and teacher materials, teacher training, outdoor classroom development, and fee title acquisition. This funding was derived from a wide range of sources, including the Pacific Forest and Watershed Lands Stewardship Council Infrastructure Fund (\$90,275), the National Fish and Wildlife Federation 5 Star Restoration Grant (\$25,000), the Plumas County Resource Advisory Committee (\$22,000) in Partnership with the Feather River Coordinated Resource Management Group, and several private donors (\$95,000).

2. Impact on collaboration and cooperation among stakeholders:

- a) Number of people/entities involved in project-

The total number of students and teachers impacted by our Learning Landscape properties includes all students and teachers at schools adjacent to LL properties. We have some 3 district administrators, 8 site administrators, 91 teachers and 2080 students. The total students physically using the properties is approximately 1,360, district wide, but this number continues to grow. In addition, 13 landowners have been involved in this process with another 30 associated staff (City of Portola, PNF, QCSD, IVCD, Collins Pine, PG&E) in assistance. In active use of these sites it is more difficult to nail down.

- b) Increased cooperation/decreased conflict among stakeholders

Learning Landscapes, as a school based program has received zero negative press or interactions. This includes one particular phone call with local who usually has concerns about issues in several areas-on a phone call, he had only one question about LL and then went on to commend us for all of our hard work for the kids and thoughtful program design. By integrating

benefit for local kids as a central focus in our broad vision for this program, we have created true neutral ground for land conservation and possibly a change of mind for many.

3. Capacity building within region

- a) Description of how completion of this project improved capabilities of grant recipients, partners, or larger community.

The Learning Landscapes program increased the Feather River Land Trusts capacity to work with the Plumas Unified School District to enhance educational opportunities for outdoor learning for all Plumas County Schools, as well as schools in Lassen and Sierra Counties. The larger community of landowners have now come forward to make lands available for educational use; in the past, this land was off limits to many educators or there was no formal agreement set up to protect landowners from potential liability. Finally, the Learning Landscape program continues to grow in new ways-by offering our "After School Teacher Outings", bringing students into the actual management of Learning Landscapes Properties, and by strengthening relationships with the largest landowner in Plumas County, the US Forest Service.

4. On-page description of Project accomplishments:

- a) Description of how the Project succeeded in accomplishing its intent and the direct benefits that resulted from the Project.

While California's bond freeze did dampen our ability to get some work completed during this period, we were able to complete on-going pre-acquisition work, including the signing of 10 MOU's allowing educational use on priority Learning Landscape properties, completion of a conservation easement on the Taylorsville Elementary Learning Landscape at the Pearce Ranch, near completion of the fee title purchase of the Quincy Learning Landscape from Rick Leonhardt, and extensive planning and community contacts which will lead to the continued success of FRLT's Learning Landscape Program. Several additional MOU's are in progress and our program has expanded to Westwood area schools. In addition, *over \$230,000* in additional private, foundation, and public funds were leveraged for the Learning Landscape program over the entire grant period.

- b) Description of the follow-on or indirect benefits of the Project.

The Learning Landscapes Program has stimulated a whole new area of growth and collaboration for land based education in Plumas County. We have seen interest in the program from students, teachers, PUSD leadership, parents, landowners, and volunteers. Included in this report is our spring 2011

“After School Teacher Outings” schedule. These outings support teachers to move toward greater curriculum integration with local natural resources and provide local students with a more meaningful and relevant education.

- c) Description of any significant positive experiences and unanticipated occurrences, or other noteworthy events that happened during the Project and anything about the Project that gives you “goose bumps”.

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- d) Description of lessons learned during the course of completing the Project.

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5. **Number of acres preserved under the easement or acquisition:** 324 acres under conservation easement, 42 acres of fee title acquisition (closing by September, 2011), and approximately 600 acres with access granted via memorandum of understanding
6. Number of acres of forest, riparian, and wetland habitat preserved under the easements or acquisitions; number of acres of working landscape preserved; and, number of acres, if any, of endangered species habitat preserved.

Vegetation Type	~Acres
Forest	300
Riparian	200
Wetland	100
Working Landscape*	360

*Working landscape acres may include lands in above vegetation classes as well.

Appendix 1

Feather River Watershed Map