

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: Central Modoc Resource Conservation District

Project Title: Watershed Restoration Projects, Planning and Development

SNC Reference Number: SNC 070302 **Submittal Date:** March 2012

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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 is the final report for this grant. The documents required for permits for all four of our projects have been completed. Two projects were permitted, and installed. The documents for the other two have been submitted to the appropriate state and Federal agencies and are awaiting approval. We developed a booth for display in the Modoc National Forest lobby and the River Center. We fulfilled the remaining agreed tasks of this grant.

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 applications for state and federal permits for the Pedotti and Hagge projects are enclosed. We completed these tasks in this reporting period. We also updated our outreach displays to reflect the involvement of SNC in our restoration efforts in the Upper Pit River Watershed.

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 engineer originally contracted for the Hagge project was laid-off from the company he worked for, and they dropped our project rather than give us a new engineer. That set us behind by an additional month to start again with a new engineer. We did find a new

Archeologist in our area that is now available for contracting. It was very convenient compared to having to wait for someone to come up from Redding.

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

During this period we were able to find local sources of contractors necessary for the completion of the project. In previous projects and with other agencies, we have not been able to use local skilled labor for things like Archeology, and Engineering. Our area is so remote and sparsely populated, that it is difficult to find what we need locally. By using local contractors we were able to save considerable amounts of money off of our projected budget. This will enable us to do the same amount of work in the future for much less money. In addition, we are supporting our local community.

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 This Period	Actual Dollars Grant Start to Date
Grant & Contract Administration	\$18,699.00	\$2261.53	\$ 16,885.31
Project Coord. & Doc. Devel.	\$22,698.00	\$6390.30	\$ 22,942.64
Materials and Supplies	\$5,000.00	\$3312.87	\$ 3,801.27
Equipment	\$5,600.00	\$2115.38	\$ 2,115.38
Project Costs	\$27,000.00	\$5879.46	\$ 17,260.02
Contract Services	\$53,500.00	\$8233.00	\$ 23,552.17
River Center Outreach	\$10,000.00	\$	\$ 4,741.91
GRAND TOTAL	\$142,497.00	\$	\$ 91,298.70

Explanation: (if needed)

We were able to use half the amount of money as expected by partnering with NRCS for NEPA and engineering services for two of our projects. We were also able to use the archeology survey conducted by NRCS for the Pedotti project, further reducing our expenses. Our Watershed Coordinator did some of the work that had been originally intended for a contractor, which put us over budget under category B. Overall, we were able to make changes that allowed us to finish this project for 64% of what we originally thought it would cost.

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.)*

None for this period. See part B.

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

The next step will be to continue to seek funding to install the Pedotti and Hagge projects and to conduct the follow up monitoring of our methodologies to insure success. We have submitted proposals to the Integrated Regional Watershed Management Plan to be included in potential funding for the Hagge Project. The Pedotti project will most likely be completed by the landowner over a period of time.

Final Report Only

Capacity Building Results and Collaboration and Cooperation with Stakeholders:

Description of Project Accomplishments:

1. Most Significant Accomplishment

The most significant accomplishment achieved through this grant could be one of two things. The first is the strengthening and expansion of our partnerships. The development of a design/permitting/installation partnership using resources available through NRCS, significantly reduced the cost of restoration projects in our area by 40%. By working in tandem with the NRCS office staff we were able to help each other achieve conservation goals that would not have been met with either of us working independently. This partnership has always existed in our area, but the merging of staff, equipment, resources, and programs enabled us to not only get the permitting done for half cost, but also get the installation completed in record time. If we had not been available for permitting (through this grant) the project wouldn't have happened through NRCS alone. If we had tried to do all of it, we would still be looking for grant money to install the project. Together we were able to get it done in 2 years. We are now taking this model and applying it to our other partners such as the US Fish and Wildlife Service for getting other projects completed.

The other significant achievement is the design and permitting of the Hagge project. This has been on the back burner for over 6 years on our office, but we never had sufficient funds for the engineering work. NRCS was not able to help with this one because they were wary of working on the Main Pit River and the complexity of the currents involved. It has been a project on our wait list for far too long, and it is very nice to have it be "shovel ready" for other grant opportunities.

2. WOW factor

In other regions there are multiple potential sources for funding and sources for contractors. In a county that is over 80% federally owned lands, and less than 10,000 people, 21% of whom are not working, it is REALLY hard to find funding for protecting the aquatic resources and habitats of our area. Truly, these four projects would not have happened if it weren't for the SNC grant program. By being able to permit these projects and demonstrate them in photos and tours (also funded in this grant) we have been able to more than DOUBLE the habitat protection actually funded through this grant, by inspiring neighbors and other landowners to step up

and initiate their own projects. Although funding permits is not as flashy or photogenic as actual on-the-ground installation projects, without the permits the installation projects cannot happen through ANY means. In small rural disadvantaged communities like Modoc County, state and federal funding are the ONLY way that engineering and permitting can take place. Landowners are barely breaking even, and although they do care about having wildlife on their property, they cannot pay for the permit fees or the design work. Often some will just do the work anyway, without permits, but also without informed designs or methods that would work. Sometimes with disastrous results. I cannot emphasize enough that programs like this that helps fund permitting, NEPA/CEQA, and engineering ensure that the habitat and water quality are able to take place.

Although Modoc is considered “pristine” by some and not in need for restoration, really it should be considered a region where it is more feasible to make a genuine impact with far fewer dollars than in other regions; a “low hanging fruit” for water quality, water quantity and riparian habitat. One hundred and twenty years of heavy grazing and stream alteration has left its mark on our systems, but we are freer to make the improvements necessary on large scales due to the lack of heavy development, given financial participation by state and federal programs. We discuss restoration in the scale of miles, rather than in feet. This type of scale ensures a real possibility for genuine riparian habitat in the scale that a sensitive fish or migratory bird would use, and ensures preservation of species and landscapes for future generations to enjoy.

3. Design and Implementation

One method we used in our area for restoring an entrenched wet meadow area was a specially designed interlocking sheet piling. They are pounded into wet soil, and they hold the soil in place. The ones in the main channel are pounded deeper in the soil, to allow flow over them. This is used instead of a pond and plug method. It seems to involve less disturbance and movement of soil, and creates a natural looking stream that floods seasonally into the wet meadow as it should. This method raises the water table, and reduces the need for outside irrigation if the land is used for agriculture. The sheet piling also is more cost effective, more stable and less visually intrusive than using rock.

4. Indirect Impact

Our project brought the two neighbors downstream to the table for two separate projects. We will in total end up treating 3.1 miles of Pit River and 2.2 miles of Willow Creek instead of proposed 1.07 miles of Pit River and 1.4 miles of Willow Creek once we are completed with permitting the new sites. By funding the four on this grant, SNC has inspired others to step forward to make efforts towards water quality and habitat restoration on their ranches.

5. Collaboration and Conflict Resolution

Collaboration for water quality and stream projects has always been strong in our area, but over the last 3 years the many state, federal, tribal and local agencies have begun meeting regularly to collaborate for projects beyond just water quality, adding focus to upslope habitat and tourism as well. By combining together we expand our ability to pool

resources and jointly apply for funding for larger scale projects. One such collaboration is the Integrated Regional Watershed Management Plan being developed for the Upper Pit River watershed. NRCS cannot apply directly, but we were able to apply for projects on behalf of producers who have great habitat and water quality projects but do not meet funding criteria through NRCS. This is a way that we can assist NRCS achieve their goals as they assist us with ours.

6. Capacity Building

During the course of this grant our computer systems died, and we needed to replace them. This upgraded our machines (some were 10 years old), which will allow us to continue for many years to come. We were also able to purchase water quality monitoring equipment, to add to our existing equipment to expand the types of measurements we can take in our area. We will now be able to include this as a part of our scope of work for our future project proposals. The partnerships with the federal agencies also expanded our capacity by demonstrating how we can do the same amount of work for half the amount of money, making our proposals more competitive.

7. Challenges

Some of the challenges we faced included a turnover of staff, limited talent pools for contractors, and limited staff time.

8. Photographs

9. Post Grant Plans

We will be seeking funding for the final two projects to be installed, then completing the installation. We will continue follow-up monitoring of the installed projects to ensure success of our designs and to monitor noxious weeds. Two to three times per year we have public displays at local community events, where we will continue to promote habitat restoration and the contribution of our partners (such as SNC) towards successful projects.

10. Post Grant Contact

The post grant contact for these projects would be our Board President Chico Pedotti (530) 233- 4300. Additionally, Bryon Hadwick the District Conservationist for the Alturas Field Office of NRCS (530)233-8868.