

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: American River Conservancy

Project title: Purchase of the Gold Hill Ranch and Wakamatsu Tea
and Silk Farm Colony Site

SNC Reference Number: SNC 080146 Submittal Date: 2/4/2011

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Check one:

 6-Month Progress Report
 X Final Report

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

- A. Progress Report Summary:** During the project period, the American River Conservancy (ARC) completed a baseline documentation report, purchased a conservation easement over the 272.1 acre Gold Hill Ranch, transferred the conservation easement interest to the Placer Land Trust and finally, succeeded in acquiring the fee title interest of the Gold Hill Ranch.
- B. Deliverables or Outcomes completed during this Reporting Period or Milestones Achieved:** Milestones achieved include the permanent protection of 272.1 acres of oak woodland, grassland, riparian, wetland and pond habitat; the permanent protection of 0.97 miles of stream frontage; and the creation of lasting partnerships between the American River Conservancy and numerous funding and supporting businesses, agencies, organizations and individuals.
- C. Challenges or Opportunities Encountered:** The American River Conservancy encountered challenges associated with securing additional grant funding to purchase the Gold Hill Ranch. A creative solution to close part of the funding gap was to purchase a conservation easement over the entire ranch, transfer the easement to a willing partner (Placer Land Trust) and then subsequently close escrow on the entire fee title interest of the Gold Hill Ranch. ARC also needed to provide an additional \$1,284,000 beyond what was provided by the Sierra Nevada Conservancy, the Farm and Ranchland Protection Program (NRCS) and private donations. Two loans were secured – one from New Resources Bank (\$900,000) and one from the Veerkamp family (\$384,000).

D. Unanticipated Successes Achieved: During the project period, the American River Conservancy was successful in completing the first phase of stabilization and restoration of the historic 1854 Graner farmhouse. This project, completed entirely with funding provided from the California Cultural and Historical Endowment (CCHE), brings the ARC one step closer to establishing a museum on the property that will interpret the many layers of history.

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
SNC portion of purchase price	\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000
GRAND TOTAL	\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000

Additional purchase funding was provided as follows:

Budget category	Amount	Source
Purchase price	\$485,000	NRCS Farm and Ranchland Protection Program
Purchase price	\$900,000	New Resource Bank (Loan)
Purchase price	\$384,000	Veerkamp Trust (Loan)
Purchase Price	\$519,000	American River Conservancy
TOTAL Purchase Price	\$3,288,000	272.1 acres)

F. Do you have information to report on the project-specific Performance Measures for your project?

The specific Performance measures chosen for this project are **acres protected** and **linear feet of stream bank protected**. The American River Conservancy successfully completed the permanent protection of 272.1 acres of wetland, oak woodland and grassland habitat through fee acquisition. The primary purposes of conservation include: habitat protection, cultural resource protection, public education and public recreation. The Gold Hill Ranch acquisition project also successfully protected 5,121 linear feet (0.97 miles) of stream bank along Granite Creek and Shingle Creek. These creeks are significant tributaries to the South Fork American River and provide reproductive habitat for an assemblage of five native fish species.

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.

Additional work products include a baseline documentation report, prepared by the American River Conservancy for the purchase of the conservation easement

interest in the property in addition to numerous articles relating to media coverage of the project. These are included as Attachment A(baseline report) and Attachment B (media coverage and articles).

- H. Next Steps:** Additional proposed work on this project in the next six (6) months will include the restoration and enhancement of 27 acres of pond, wetland and riparian habitat on the property. The American River Conservancy recently submitted a funding proposal to the Sacramento District Wetlands Conservation Fund administered by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and National Fish and Wildlife Foundation. The proposed project will rehabilitate and enhance existing aquatic resources, including portions of the riparian areas of Granite Creek and Shingle Creek; enhance and restore the banks and littoral zones of the three (3) ponds and will also restore hydrologic function and native biodiversity of the seasonal wetland. Non-native largemouth bass and bullfrogs in the largest of the three ponds will be removed to create suitable habitat for native aquatic wildlife.

In addition to the restoration and enhancement project, educational activities and volunteer opportunities are already planned on the subject property. Docent-training workshops, restoration workshops and bird monitoring workshops are planned in February through May of 2011. Educational programs and a working partnership with Gold Trail School are already being implemented.

Please Complete this Section for FINAL Report ONLY

Capacity-Building Results and Collaboration and Cooperation with Stakeholders:

Many new partnerships were created and existing partnerships were strengthened as a result of this project. Partnerships with the local school district (Gold Trail Union School District) have been formed to collaborate on educational and service-learning projects. This partnership is currently seeking funding to take students to the Gold Hill Ranch for restoration and monitoring activities. Partnerships with El Dorado County farmers, wineries and other agricultural interests have been created to facilitate the creation of a demonstration farm and market farm products at the Gold Hill Ranch Wakamatsu Colony site. Local winery David Girard Vineyards has recently produced a commemorative wine (Okei-San Syrah) of which proceeds from each sale go to support the Gold Hill Ranch Wakamatsu Colony project. Additional partnerships with the California Rice Commission, the Bureau of Land Management, Sierra Nevada Conservancy and the Placer Land Trust have been significantly strengthened by the purchase of the Gold Hill Ranch Wakamatsu Colony site.

Partnerships with local agencies, districts and organizations such as the El Dorado County and Georgetown Divide Resource Conservation District, the El Dorado County Weed Management Group and local historical societies have been strengthened because this project is compelling and demands inter-disciplinary collaboration. What the American River Conservancy lacks in terms of specialized knowledge of historical and cultural resources and farming, it has gained from these valuable partnerships.

Description of Project Accomplishments:

1. Most Significant Accomplishment

The most significant accomplishment that resulted from this grant is the permanent protection of the biological, cultural and natural resources of the 272.1 acre Gold Hill Ranch. Biological and natural resources protected as a result of this grant include two perennial tributaries to the South Fork American River, a large pond, two smaller ponds, two seasonal drainages, a seasonal wetland, approximately 75 acres of blue oak and interior live oak woodland and annual grassland habitats. The project also protects soils of unique and statewide importance. The cultural resources protected as a result of this grant include: (1) a known Southern Maidu – Nisenan ethnographic site; (2) an historic farmhouse built by Charles Graner in 1854; (3) an historic Japanese settlement site (the Wakamatsu Colony); (4) the gravesite of the first woman of Japanese descent to be buried in North American; and (5) post-1870 farming and dairy structures built by the Veerkamp family.

2. WOW Factor

During the course of this project, the American River Conservancy and its partners (most notably the California Rice Commission and Past Forward, Inc.) were successful in listing the property on the National Register of Historic Places at a level of National Significance. This project also commanded nation-wide media coverage due to the considerable cultural resources and significance of the site to Japanese

Americans and visitors from Japan who make annual pilgrimages to the gravesite of Okei Ito, located on the 272.1 acre Ranch. Additionally, the American River Conservancy, the California Rice Commission and the Bureau of Land Management were successful in introducing a bipartisan Congressional bill (S. 1596, H.R. 4108; Gold Hill Wakamatsu Preservation Act of 2009) that would provide additional purchase funding.

3. Design and Implementation

During implementation of this project, the American River Conservancy drew on many diverse partners to champion the project. This was invaluable in gaining bipartisan support from Congress and will continue to be important as we move forward with a Master Plan for the property.

4. Indirect Impact

Indirect benefits of this project include the formation of an additional non-profit organization, the Gold Hill Wakamatsu Colony Foundation, which aids in cultivating donations for this project.

5. Collaboration and Conflict Resolution

As described above, partnerships have been integral to this project's success. Partners have helped to fill in the gaps in expertise that the American River Conservancy does not have; furthermore, partners have provided valuable comments, perspective and historical context. Although this project is the result of work led by the American River Conservancy, we would not be able to be successful were it not for the countless volunteers, partner agencies and organizations, willing landowners and funding agencies that have donated time, expertise and funds.

6. Capacity-Building

American River Conservancy is a strong, stable organization entering its third decade of service. With six (6) full-time staff, four (4) part-time staff and two (2) seasonal staff, the American River Conservancy is relatively large for a local non-profit organization. Like all non-profit organizations, ARC is constantly seeking support from the local, regional, statewide and national community. Philanthropic support has seen a slight decline since the economic recession, and it has affected the ARC. The American River Conservancy is a staff-driven organization, with a 13-member Board of Directors that serves as our decision-making body. The Board of Directors is becoming more responsive and active in soliciting donations and cultivating donors. Certain board members have strengths in organizational planning, while others are seasoned grant writers. The membership of the American River Conservancy is currently at 500 households. As a result of this grant, this project has also brought together very diverse community members to champion a common goal – protecting and interpreting the unique qualities of the Gold Hill Ranch Wakamatsu Colony site.

7. Challenges

The major challenge faced by this project was the lack of funding. While ARC was able to secure loans to bridge the funding gap, we are still actively pursuing additional partnerships and grant opportunities to help lighten the loan burden. The Sierra Nevada Conservancy was our largest funder and was found to be helpful with the escrow process.

8. Photographs

Please see Attachment C.

9. Post Grant Plans

Currently, ARC is in the beginning stages of creating a Master Plan for the Gold Hill Ranch Wakamatsu Colony site. Preliminary planning discussions have identified the following activities and operations on the Gold Hill Ranch: (1) Restoration and enhancement of riparian, wetland, pond and woodland habitat; (2) creation of hiking trails on the property; (3) creation of a sustainable farming operation on portions of the property; and (4) interpretation of cultural resources.

Additional organizations we expect involvement from are the Gold Hill Wakamatsu Colony Foundation, the California Rice Commission, the Japanese American Citizens League, People to People International, the Bureau of Land Management, California Department of Parks and Recreation, the El Dorado County and Georgetown Divide Resource Conservation District, the California Conservation Corps, Nevada AmeriCorps Program, Intel Corporation, Kikkoman, Geikekkan, El Dorado County Historical Society, El Dorado County Library, Gold Trail Union School District, Army Corps of Engineers, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, United Auburn Indian Community, Placer Land Trust, Shingle Springs Rancheria, Natural Resources Conservation Service and Trout Unlimited, to name a few.

Plans to financially support the project in future years will include cultivating support from corporate foundations, federal grant programs, State grant programs, volunteer support and community donations. There will also be program income from some of the future planned activities and operations. Communication plans include a robust marketing and media campaign in concert with a fundraising campaign and events to garner additional support and interest in the project. The national media attention to this project has brought it to the forefront.

10. Post Grant Contact

Alan Ehrgott, Executive Director (Ehrgott@arconservancy.org; 530-295-2190)

Elena DeLacy, Conservation Project Coordinator (Elena@arconservancy.org)

Noël Robinson, Marketing and Development Director (noel@arconservancy.org; 530-621-1224)

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 in the Sierra Nevada

This project leveraged a great deal of resources from various sources. See the table below for a breakdown of budget categories and funding or in-kind sources.

Budget category	Dollar Value	Source
Purchase price	\$1,000,000	Sierra Nevada Conservancy
Purchase price	\$485,000	NRCS Farm and Ranchland Protection Program
Purchase price	\$900,000	New Resource Bank (Loan)
Purchase price	\$384,000	Veerkamp Trust (Loan)
Purchase Price	\$519,000	American River Conservancy (donations)
TOTAL Purchase Price	\$3,288,000	
Historic Farmhouse Stabilization	\$485,000	California Cultural and Historical Endowment(CCHE) Grant
Archaeological Services	\$12,000	Past Forward, Inc. (In-Kind)
Graphics and Marketing	\$50,000	California Rice Commission (In-kind)
OTHER SERVICES	\$547,000	

The Sierra Nevada Conservancy grant leveraged \$2,288,000 towards the total purchase price of the subject property and leveraged an additional \$547,000 in grant funding and in-kind services for a total of \$2,835,000 of resources leveraged related to this project.

2. Number and Diversity of People Reached

This project has reached an estimated 1,500 people through mailings, email communication and project-specific events and volunteer programs.

3. Number and Type of Jobs Created

This project created three (3) jobs. In December 2010, January 2010 and part of February 2010 ARC was able to employ a full time supervisor (Liz Carr) and two full-time Green Job Corps Interns (Erick Fredrickson and Tylor Marvos) through Golden Sierra Job Training Agency. These positions were needed to clean up debris and perform general maintenance of the property.

4. Linear Feet of Stream Bank Protected

This project protects 5,121 linear feet of stream bank.

5. Acres of Land Conserved

This project protects 272.1 acres of land.

6. Number of Special Significant Sites Protected or Preserved

One 272.1 acre parcel with multiple cultural resources (one of which is of national significance), 26 acres of wetland habitat and soils of unique and statewide importance.

ATTACHMENT A

BASELINE DOCUMENTATION REPORT