

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: Sierra Business Council

Project title: Sierra Best Value Stewardship Contracting Workshops

SNC Reference Number: **SNC** 70102 **Submission Date:** 5/29/09

Report Preparer: Betony Jones **Phone #:** 530-582-4800 x.24

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: From April 2008 – May 2009, we organized and held 3 2-day workshops and 2 1-day workshops on Biomass Utilization and Stewardship Contracting. The two-day workshops were held in Auburn, Sonora, and Tulare, and the one day workshops were held in Bishop and Mammoth Lakes. In addition, we have worked with the Rural Voices for Conservation Coalition on several biomass and stewardship contracting issue papers, ran educational briefings for Congressional staff in Washington, DC, and engaged in follow-up activities with interested groups in the Southern Sierra, the Eastern Sierra, the Northern Sierra, Nevada, Placer, and Calaveras Counties, and recently a interested group in North Fork. In total, over 250 people have attended the 8 days of workshop.

B. Deliverables or Outcomes completed during this Reporting Period or Milestones Achieved:

We held a total of 8 days of workshops, serving over 280 people from six communities in the Sierra Nevada. We brought in dozens of experts as well as local contractors, resource managers, environmental representatives, forest supervisors, and other federal resource agency staff to share information and experience; we facilitated vibrant discussions; and we ensured follow-up resources were available. Several new partnerships have formed since the workshops including the Calaveras Consensus Group and the Nevada County Bioenergy Task Force. The workshop in Sonora propelled forward an effort to build a densified wood brick plant by Bear Mountain Forest Products. There are interest and efforts to start Consensus Groups in North Fork and in the Southern Sierra.

We worked in partnership with other organization to conduct educational briefings in Washington DC and to produce the attached issue papers:

Stewardship End-Result Contracting; Woody Biomass Issue Paper; Climate Change Issue Paper: Climate Change, Rural Communities and Landscapes; Rural Green Jobs: The Foundation of a Rural Green Economy; Best Value Contracting Issue Paper; and Thermal Energy Uses of Woody Biomass.

C. Challenges or Opportunities Encountered: The State budget freeze proved helpful for this project because it allowed us to finish the workshop series in May 2009, when the most people could attend. All in all, there were very few challenges encountered in engaging in the activities funded by this grant. There are challenges with implementing stewardship contracting and biomass utilization on the ground in the Sierra, and these challenges range from mistrust between the Forest Service, environmental groups, and contractors and a general unwillingness to work together to litigation on projects the Forest Service tries to undertake, to the high cost of removing waste material from the forest, to federal policy that limits options for using material from federal lands, to the continued closure of mills and loss of infrastructure and workforce to manage and process forest material.

Our activities have tried to address and overcome these challenges. Several opportunities include new federal climate change legislation encouraging renewable energy production and ARRA funds for transportation subsidies to keep the local Terra Bella mill open. Additionally, the Sierra Nevada Conservancy staff (Bobby Kaminsky, Brandon Sanders, and Mandy Vance) is starting to play the important role of facilitating multi-stakeholder groups in some Sierra communities. The relevance of this particular opportunity cannot be overstated, as having a neutral member of the community supported and invested in helping move a collaborative group forward is the key to the effort's success.

D. Unanticipated Successes Achieved: We did not anticipate getting so involved in the national movement to make sustainable biomass utilization and best-value stewardship contracting more widely used tools. The partnerships we formed with groups across the country brought significant interest and assistance to the Sierra Nevada and have made our region's issues and challenges more widely known and understood. By leveraging these partnerships, we were able to conduct a third 2-day workshop (in Tulare) that was not in our original proposal.

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
Staffing (Project Manager and Assts)	\$30,335	\$30625
Travel	\$6147	\$6475.15
Meeting facilities	\$1500	\$1400
Meeting materials	\$2400	\$2400
Overhead	\$6058	\$5617
GRAND TOTAL	\$46440	\$46517.15

Explanation: (if needed)

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

There were no specific performance measures identified in the grant proposal, but the number of people reached was 280.

G. Were there any other relevant materials produced under the terms of this Agreement that are not a part of the budgeted deliverables?

Photos are below and other materials are attached. In addition, PDF copies of the presentations from the Tulare website are available at http://groups.ucanr.org/WoodyBiomass/Tulare%5F2009%5FWorkshop/Agenda_&_Presentations.htm. Group reports from the Tulare workshop are also posted. The three themes that emerged were: "Partnership", "Investment" and "Start Small and Grow".



Figure 2. Discussion Group, Tulare Biomass Workshop



Figure 1. Participants, Tulare Biomass Workshop

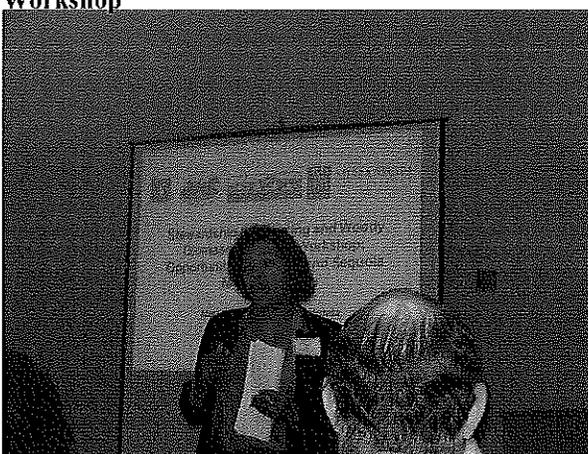


Figure 3. Tina Turell, Sequoia Forest Supervisor

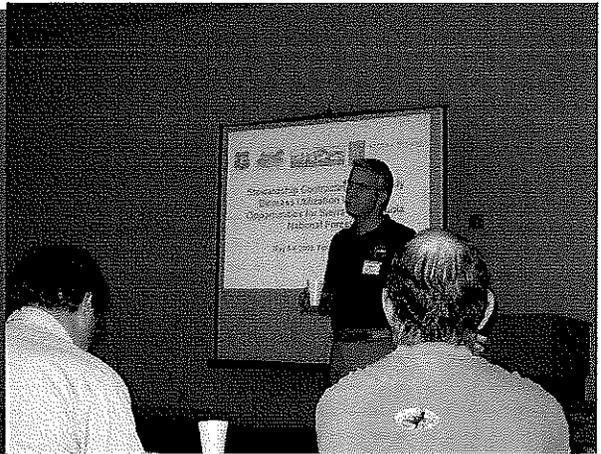


Figure 4. Ed Cole, Sierra Forest Supervisor

H. Next Steps:

The activities under the SNC-funded phase of our Biomass work are completed. SBC will continue to engage in strategic direction of the Rural Voices of Conservation Coalition. Additionally we plan to work to get some of the sub-

regional Consensus Groups off the ground. We will also continue our participation in the Nevada County Bioenergy Task Force. We will continue working with the US Forest Service to bring information and resources to Sierra communities trying to move forward on these issues.

Please Complete this Section for FINAL Report ONLY

Capacity-Building Results and Collaboration and Cooperation with Stakeholders:

Sierra Business Council partnered with the Watershed Center for Training and Education (Hayfork, CA), Resource Innovations (Eugene, OR), Fuels for Schools, (Montana), the US Forest Service (Region 5), UC Berkeley, and the California Association of Resource Conservation and Development Councils to run the workshops. SBC partnered with Resource Innovations, Sustainable Northwest (Portland, OR), Rural Voices for Conservation Coalition, the Center for Rural Strategies, American Forests, Biomass Energy Resource Center, Environmental and Energy Study Institute, and many local businesses, community groups, and individuals on the follow-up activities.

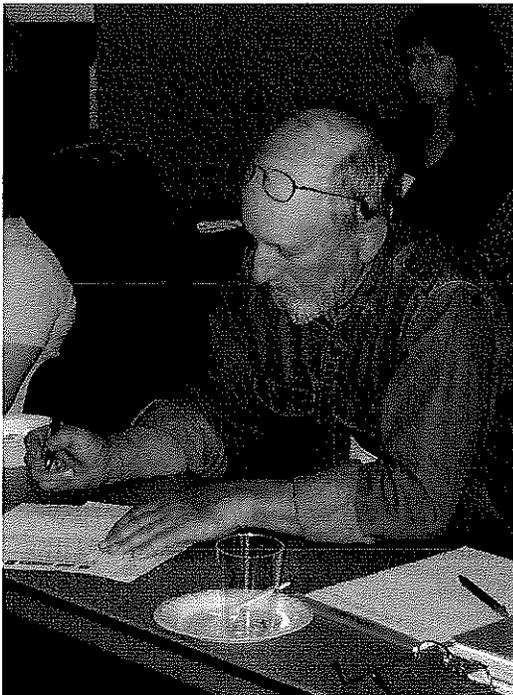


Figure 5. John Wagy, Tulare Biomass Workshop

These partnerships were key in undertaking the variety and scope of activities that we did under this grant. Specifically, the issue papers and outreach in our nation's capital would not have taken place in the absence of these partnerships. Since several substantial challenges with stewardship contracting and biomass utilization are related to federal decision-making and policies, the outreach work to education policy makers on Sierra Nevada issues and challenges is key to moving projects forward. SBC will continue working with this range of partners on rural resource issues.

Description of Project Accomplishments:

1. Most Significant Accomplishment

The new partnerships as described above, which allowed us to engage in a meaningful level on the national scale and bring significant expertise and resources to the region.

2. WOW Factor

The Bear Mountain brick plant that is being built in Sonora is exactly the type of investment that is capitalizing on the information presented and collaborative environment that emerged from the workshops. I am also encouraged by the role the Sierra Nevada Conservancy is committed to playing to move collaborative projects forward.

3. Design and Implementation

Collaborate with other groups, pooling resources and effort, allows us to do so much more than we could on our own. This project was a remarkable testament to exactly how collaboration should work—that is, everyone puts in what they can offer and the burden is shared.

4. Indirect Impact

The workshops we conducted in the Sierra are being modeled by other groups in Oregon, Alaska, Washington, and other states. The issue papers are being used to shape strategy for dozens of community based groups around the Western US.

5. Collaboration and Conflict Resolution

We did not encounter any conflict, although it is challenging to sync schedules with the Forest Service. I learned that significant advance outreach with the Forest Service is the best way to partner and get buy in from the agency. Also, working directly with the Forest Supervisors helps get buy in from field staff.

6. Capacity-Building

SBC is sound financially, but we struggle with wanting to help efforts around the region and having very limited unallocated dollars in our budget. Unless we have specific funding for a project or our participation in a project, we are very limited in what we can do. There are always more opportunities than we can commit to. A lot is expected from SBC in helping efforts toward sustainability in the region, and people get frustrated when we cannot engage with them.

7. Challenges

We really didn't face any challenges. Outreach and getting people to come to events/workshops takes an enormous amount of time—one-on-one phone calls. SNC could have been more helpful with outreach.

8. Photographs

See photos above.

9. Post Grant Plans

We would like to continue with follow up activities. In particular, we would like to bring additional expertise and resources to the Consensus Groups. We have not yet identified a source of funding for the follow up.

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.

Betony Jones, 530-563-8384, betony.jones@gmail.com

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

There were no Performance Measures identified in our Grant Agreement.

Sierra Nevada Conservancy Grant Program Project Reporting Guidelines

Progress Reports are required periodically throughout the term of the Grant Agreement (Refer to Exhibit B of the Grant Agreement). These reports will allow you and the Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) to see the degree to which the project is on track and achieving your projected outcomes. Your Progress Reports will further provide the SNC with information that will help us to explain your work to the Board Members and various other audiences. Timing of Progress Reports is specified in the Project Schedule included in Exhibit A of the Grant Agreement, but generally every 6 months until completion of the project.

A Progress Reporting Form is provided to Grantees on the SNC Website. **Six-month Progress Reports** should reflect the previous 6-month period; **Final Reports** should address each question for the entire grant period – looking at the project as a whole.

The form specifies the items you will need to report on. For the Six-Month Interim Report these include, but are not limited to: *A Progress Report Summary of work completed, Deliverables or Outcomes Completed, Challenges or Opportunities Encountered, Unanticipated Successes Achieved, Actual Costs compared to Budgeted Costs, Any Additional Relevant Materials Produced, and Next Steps.*

The Final Report will include additional information, such as: *Resources Leveraged, Capacity-Building Results and Collaboration and Cooperation with Stakeholders, a Description of Project Accomplishments, and SNC Approved Performance Measures.*

Please make sure that you submit complete reports by the dates requested in your Grant Agreement.

