

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: Placer County Planning Department

Project title: Eastern Placer Creek Signage

SNC Reference Number: SNC 070138 **Submittal Date:** April 1, 2010

Report Preparer: Christopher Schmidt **Phone:** 530.745.3076

Check one:

6-Month Progress Report

Final Report

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

The Eastern Placer Creek Signage project involved placing blue-and-white metal signs with streams' names, a uniform logo, and "No Littering No Dumping" on them throughout the unincorporated area of Placer County from Auburn to the Lake Tahoe/Martis Valley area.

Fifty-four crossings in the western portion of the county were previously signed by in western Placer County. By knowing the names of the streams we drive across every day in our communities, citizens of, and visitors to, Placer County will gain a sense of ownership and protectiveness. Signage also helps educate the public about their role in water quality and protection of critical fisheries habitat.

Signs installed through the grant were placed at the locations in the table below.

Creek Crossing Sign Locations

Creek	Road	Location
Auburn Ravine	Wise Road	at Ophir Road
Bear Creek	Alpine Meadows Rd.	Snowcrest Road
Bear River (one sign)	Dog Bar Road	County line
Blue Canyon	Blue Canyon Road	South of Airport Road
Bunch Canyon	Yankee Jims	At Smothers Ravine Road
Canyon Creek	Alta Bonnynook	Near I-80
Canyon Creek	Casa Loma Road	Near I-80 and Wild Rose Lane
Canyon Creek	Kearsarge Mill Rd.	Near Kearsage Court
Chipmunk Creek	Soda Springs	At Riverton Road
Devils Canyon	Spring Garden Rd.	Near Yankee Jims Road
Duncan Creek		At French Meadows Reservoir Road
Forbes Creek	Brimstone Road	
Indian Creek	Iowa Hill Road	Near Big Dipper Road
Indian Creek	Big Dipper	At Iowa Hill Road
McKinley Creek	McKinley Creek Rd.	Near Robin Road
McKinley Creek	Cascades	At Woodside Drive
Miners Ravine	Dick Cook Road	Auburn-Folsom and Hidden Oaks Lane
Miners Ravine	Newcastle Road	At Cherokee Lane
N. Fork Amer. River	Foresthill Road	At Bridge
N. Fork Amer. River	Iowa Hill Road	Outside of Colfax
N. Fork Amer. River	Old Auburn	Near Foresthill Road
North Ravine	Mt. Vernon Road	Between Harris Rd. and Vineyard Drive
Orr Creek	Bell Road	Orr Creek Lane and Blue Heron Court
Owl Creek	Spring Garden Rd.	Near Morning Star Place
S. Fork Rubicon	Soda Springs	Near Riverton Road
Serena Creek	Soda Springs Road	At Serene Road
Six Mile Valley		Lake Valley Road
Skunk Canyon	Mosquito Ridge Rd.	
South Yuba River	Cisco Road	At Hampshire Rocks
South Yuba River	Hampshire Rocks	Near Donner Pass Rd.
South Yuba River	Donner Pass Road	Near Troy Road
South Yuba River		Hampshire Rocks Road
Squaw Creek	Squaw Valley Rd.	At Indian Trail Road
Squaw Creek	Squaw Valley Rd.	Near Chamonix Place
Todd Creek	Todd Valley Road	Cold Springs Green Leaf Lane
Volcano Canyon	Mosquito Ridge	Outside of Foresthill
West Martis Creek	Northstar Drive	At Lodgepole
West Martis Creek	Basque	Near Silverstrike
Wooley Creek	Placer Hills Rd.	Between Crother and Walgra Meadows roads
Wooley Creek	Crombie Road	Near Wooley Creek Lane

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.)

Seventy-nine creek signs were designed, produced and placed at 40 different creek crossings along 27 different waterways stretching from Auburn to Squaw Valley in unincorporated Placer County. The project fostered cross-jurisdictional coordination to install similar signs along creeks in two Placer County cities. Installing creek crossing signs is one way to educate the public that we all live in a watershed and are responsible for protecting it.

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.)

Several of the crossings anticipated in the project's grant application were located on CALTRANS right-of-way (Highway 49, Highway 65, Highway 89, and others). We discovered an issue with placement of non-CALTRANS approved signs at the crossings. They were not allowed. The State agency recently approved a new creek crossing sign standard based on a pilot program conducted in San Diego County. Placer County selected ten alternative creek crossings to sign and will be working with CALTRANS to obtain approval of watershed signs along its highways in Placer County.

During the 2008/9 winter season, six signs were damaged by plows. The County replaced the signs, moving them farther from the road where possible and has used a metal pole. It appears to have alleviated the damage, though we expect some will need to be replaced each year.

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

After the County's initial signs were installed, calls were received from citizens in the cities of Roseville and Lincoln seeking similar signs for their creek crossings. The County worked with various watershed planning groups and the respective cities on a signage program for their communities. Placer County supplied the sign template for their use and crossings in both cities are now signed.

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	SNC Dollars	County Cost	Total
Sign Construction and Installation	\$15,000.00	\$9,255.66	\$24,255.66
GRAND TOTAL	\$15,000.00	\$9,255.66	\$24,255.66 *

* **Explanation:** Through March 25, 2010. The County anticipates additional costs that have not been posted to date. Those costs will be shown in a final invoice to be submitted to the Sierra Nevada Conservancy in mid/late-April.

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.)

Resources Leveraged: Through March 25, 2010, the County’s match totaled \$9,255.66. This was in excess of the \$7,400 anticipated in the grant application. The additional expense reflects an increase in the cost of the metal sign panels and the replacement of damaged signs.

Collaboration: The County worked with the cities of Roseville and Lincoln to implement a similar signing program in their communities. We will also be working with CALTRANS to obtain approval to install watershed signs along State highways in seven locations.

Capacity Building: This successful, collaborative creek signage program in Placer County allows the public to become more familiar with these water bodies. The overall goal of the program was to create opportunities for the public to learn about the importance of the watersheds and encourage environmental stewardship of the watersheds by members of our community. The signs also serve as a tool to increase overall awareness that the public is responsible for preserving the cleanliness of our watersheds.

Signs Installed: Seventy-nine creek signs were installed at 40 different creek crossings in unincorporated Placer County.

Reduction in Impacts: Specific reduction in impacts to watercourses is impossible to measure. The signage project has created awareness of the creeks. It has also educated the public on the importance of protecting our watersheds and drinking water and encouraged community stewardship of watersheds.

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.)

No. Pictures of the signs installed at two of the locations have been attached.

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

The County will be applying for CALTRANS Encroachment Permits to install signs along Highways 49 and 65 in the Lincoln and Auburn areas and Highways 28 and 89 near Lake Tahoe. We will also be replacing any signs damaged during the 2009/10 snow season.

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?)

The creek crossing signage program is a small step toward working not only within each neighborhood, but also with the family of neighborhoods and cities which embrace our watercourses, to find more ways to work together and educate people about the reasons and ways to protect our common watershed. The program helped:

- Create awareness of watersheds and watercourses
- Educate the public on the importance of protecting our watersheds and drinking water
- Encourage community stewardship of watersheds
- Create uniform creek crossing sign design throughout Placer County

Residents' increased stream and watershed awareness will aid local cities and Placer County in meeting their collective goals of restoring and protecting water quality and fisheries habitat. At all levels of government there has been an increased push towards the protection and restoration of riparian and aquatic habitats (including anadromous and native resident species), protecting watershed integrity, improving water quality, improving wildlife habitat, and improving the ecological functioning of the watersheds. The creek signage program furthers these goals and as further development occurs, the impact on our natural resources is given a higher level of consideration.

Educating the public on the benefits of protecting creek corridors and natural habitat is important to the health and integrity of foothill fish and wildlife populations. Awareness plays an important role in supporting environmental education and building a public commitment to environmental conservation on future projects.

The program also led to collaboration with the cities of Lincoln and Roseville on a stream crossing signage program in their communities. The County will maintain and replace the creek signs as needed and is identifying additional crossings to sign.

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 Eastern Placer Creek Signage project involves placing blue-and-white metal signs with streams' names, a uniform logo, and "No Littering No Dumping" on them throughout the unincorporated area of Placer County from Auburn to the Lake Tahoe/Martis Valley area. Seventy-nine creek signs were installed at 40 different creek crossings along 27 different waterways. By knowing the names of the streams we drive across every day in our communities, citizens of, and visitors to, Placer County will gain a sense of ownership and protectiveness. Signage will also help educate the public about their role in protecting water quality and preserving critical fisheries habitat.

2. WOW Factor

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

Once the signs started appearing, we received phone calls from residents asking if waterways near their homes would also be signed. In several cases the callers were residents of Placer County cities where we did not have jurisdiction (or funding) to install creek signs. We put the caller in touch with City of Roseville and Lincoln employees that are involved with watershed issues. The cities were interested in the signs and the County passed along the sign template we designed for their use. The signs have a consistent look (white lettered creek name, blue background and oak leaf*), contain the message, "No Littering No Dumping," and where appropriate, the signs also say "Salmon Habitat."

*The creek signs installed under the SNC grant use are at a higher elevation and use a Linden leaf.

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?

1. If planning signage along Caltrans highways, consult with Caltrans early, apply for an encroachment permit, and agree to use their standard watershed sign.
<http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/traffops/signtech/signdel/specs/S36.pdf>
2. Work with neighboring jurisdictions to create and use a consistent design.
3. Most cities or counties produce street signs, work with your public works department to produce, install and maintain the signs in-house.

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.

Not Applicable.

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.

We approached the local office of Caltrans to seek permission to install the creek crossing signs along State highways. While interested, they notified us that we would need to obtain an Encroachment Permit through the regional Caltrans office. We did and our requests were denied. Apparently the State did not have an approved creek sign standard but was working with San Diego County on a pilot program. After contacting San Diego County, we learned that Caltrans was approving the program for statewide use. It finalized its policy directive for watershed signs and developed new language for the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) in early-2009. The County will be submitting encroachment permits for the watershed signs later this year.

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.

Though encountering staff reassignments, the County remains committed to natural resource protection efforts. The Planning Department continues to attend watershed group meetings, is implementing an open space conservation program, and is in the final stages of preparing a habitat conservation plan. Funding remains an issue, particularly for land acquisition and habitat restoration projects.

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"?

There were no significant challenges. A few of the installed signs were damaged due to snow clearing activities. Those signs were relocated where possible and instead of a wood post, a sturdier metal pole has been used.

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.

Attached.

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?

The County will continue to maintain and replace the signs as necessary. A program summary has been placed on the County's website:

<http://www.placer.ca.gov/Departments/CommunityDevelopment/Planning/PlacerLegacy/~media/cdr/Planning/PlacerLegacy/CreekCrossingSignage.ashx>

The eastern Placer creek signage program will be publicized in the Summer 2010 Placer Legacy newsletter (right).

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.

Christopher Schmidt, Senior Planner
Placer County Planning Department
3091 County Center Drive
Auburn, CA 95765

530.745.3076
crschmid@placer.ca.gov

Eastern Placer CREEK SIGNS INSTALLED



While over 1,000 miles of rivers and streams flow through Placer County, most residents would be hard pressed to name and locate many of them. Now, Placer County's waterways are beginning to receive the recognition they deserve.

Eighty signs are being placed at 40 different creek crossings along 17 different waterways stretching from Auburn to Squaw and Martis valleys. Placer County received \$15,000 in Sierra Nevada Conservancy Proposition 84 funding to assist with the program.

The project involves placing blue-and-white metal signs with stream names, a uniform logo, "No Littering No Dumping," and where appropriate "Trout or Salmon Habitat" on them throughout the unincorporated area of Placer County.

Knowing the names of the streams people drive across every day engages citizens and visitors to gain a sense of ownership and protectiveness for their watershed. Signage will also help educate the public about their role in water quality and protection of critical fisheries habitat.

The County is working with CALTRANS to install watershed signs on state highways. If approved, signs would be installed later this year.

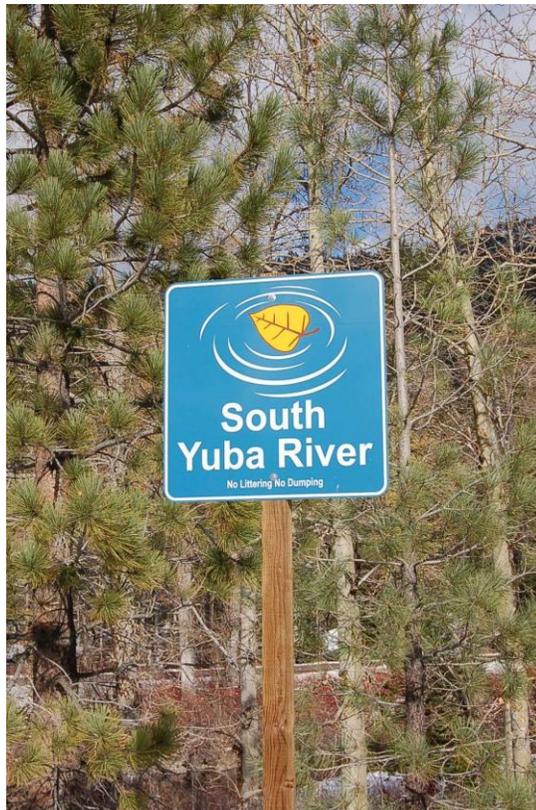
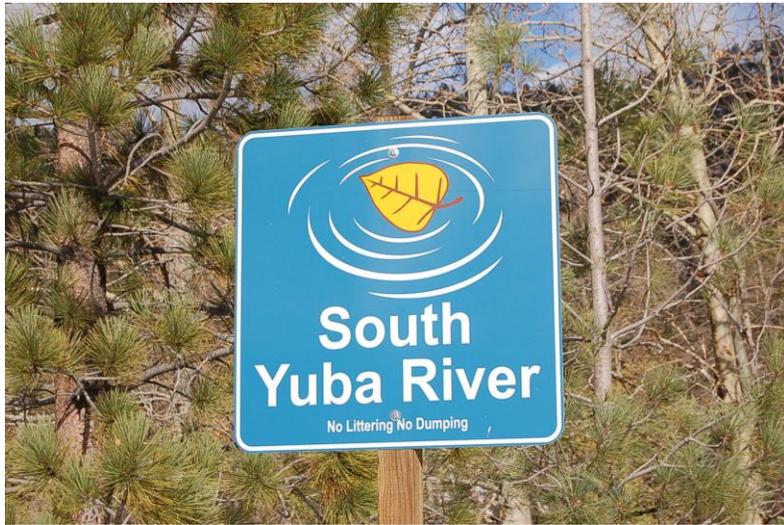
Photos



Orr Creek- Bell Road crossing in North Auburn



SNC Recognition on back of signs.



South Yuba River- Cisco Road crossing near Interstate 80