

**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:** Northern California Regional Land Trust

**Project title:** Little Chico Creek Appraisal Project

**SNC Reference Number:** SNC 446

**Submittal Date:** 01/19/2012

**Report Preparer:** Jamison Watts

**Phone #:** 530-894-7738

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

The Northern California Land Trust (NCRLT) retained the appraisal services of Peter F. Brennan & Sons – Real Estate Appraisers & Consultants to conduct appraisals subject to potential conservation easements on four large, private properties (APNs: 056-390-35, 056-390-36, 056-390-37, 056-390-38, 063-020-012, 063-020-051) within the Little Chico Creek Watershed in Butte County, California. Appraisals were conducted October 12, 2011 with final reports provided to NCRLT on October 25, 2011. The total cost for the four appraisals was \$20,000. The SNC grant award was for \$20,000.

- 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.)

Four appraisals and the corresponding reports (Brigham Property, Caldwell & Martine Property, Mott Property, and Smith Property) taking into account potential conservation easements in the Little Chico Creek Watershed were completed on October 12, 2011. The results of the reports were as follows:

Brigham Property

Market Value, Before Encumbrance: \$776,000

Market Value, After Encumbrance: \$466,000

Easement Value: \$310,000

Caldwell & Martine Property

Market Value, Before Encumbrance: \$200,000  
Market Value, After Encumbrance: \$140,000  
Easement Value: \$60,000

Mott Property

Market Value, Before Encumbrance: \$400,000  
Market Value, After Encumbrance: \$220,000  
Easement Value: \$180,000

Smith Property

Market Value, Before Encumbrance: \$150,000  
Market Value, After Encumbrance: \$105,000  
Easement Value: \$45,000

The completed appraisals were submitted to the Wildlife Conservation Board's Oak Woodlands Conservation Program in October 2011 as part of a conservation easement acquisition proposal. WCB has notified NCRLT that the proposal is eligible for Oak Woodlands Conservation Program funding and is currently reviewing draft deeds of conservation easement and the appraisals. Conservation easements on the subject properties will:

- Permanently protect four large, private properties totaling approximately 414 contiguous acres within the Little Chico Creek Watershed in Butte County.
- Connect the private properties to approximately 176 acres of land that is already owned and protected by the California Department of Fish and Game, resulting in the permanent protection of approximately 590 contiguous acres.
- Conserve approximately 348 contiguous acres of blue oak woodland while also conserving smaller patches of valley oak, black oak, interior live oak, oracle oak, canyon live oak, and scrub oak.
- Conserve annual grassland, mixed chaparral, valley-foothill riparian, spring-fed wetlands, and approximately two miles of riverine/riparian habitat along Little Chico Creek.
- Meet conservation objectives for riparian habitat, scenic open space, and several sensitive habitats and species, including but not limited to, Butte County Checkerbloom, Foothill Yellow-legged Frog, and Northwestern Pond Turtle.

**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 completion of the four, above-mentioned appraisals reports has provided NCRLT with the opportunity to continue the process of conservation easement

acquisition on the Brigham, Caldwell/Martine, Mott, and Smith properties. In addition, through the work completed on the project so far, a fifth property owner in close proximity to the subject properties has shown interest in selling a conservation easement to NCRLT.

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

While not necessarily unanticipated, upon completion of the four appraisal reports, the subject landowners decided to continue the process of selling a conservation easement to NCRLT. Towards that end, NCRLT has submitted a conservation easement acquisition proposal totaling \$595,000 to WCB's Oak Woodlands Conservation Program.

**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.)

<b>PROJECT BUDGET CATEGORIES</b>	<b>Budgeted SNC Dollars</b>	<b>Actual Dollars</b>
Direct Cost – Appraisal Fees (4 @ \$5,000 each)	\$20,000.00	<b>\$20,000.00</b>
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>\$20,000.00</b>	<b>\$20,000.00</b>

**Explanation:** (if needed)

**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.)

Four appraisals and the corresponding reports (Brigham Property, Caldwell & Martine Property, Mott Property, and Smith Property) taking into account potential conservation easements within the Little Chico Creek Watershed were completed on October 25, 2011. The results of the reports were as follows:

Brigham Property

Market Value, Before Encumbrance: \$776,000  
 Market Value, After Encumbrance: \$466,000  
 Easement Value: \$310,000

Caldwell & Martine Property

Market Value, Before Encumbrance: \$200,000  
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Smith Property

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Market Value, After Encumbrance: \$105,000  
Easement Value: \$45,000

- 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.)

Not Applicable.

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

In the next six months, we plan to continue to work with the landowners and WCB on the conservation easement acquisition process. If the project is approved by WCB, NCRLT will begin drafting option agreements and escrow instructions for each of the four subject properties.

## 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?)

Through this project, NCRLT was able to initiate partnerships with the landowners of each of the four subject properties. By providing them with appraisal services through the SNC grant, NCRLT was able to clear a potential cost-prohibitive hurdle in the early stages of this land conservation project while demonstrating our ability to successfully achieve results for the landowners. Aside from the appraisal services, NCRLT has also had opportunities to meet with each landowner and discuss the draft deeds of conservation easement.

NCRLT has also received support from various agencies or groups through this project that has strengthened already existing partnerships. NCRLT received letters in support of the project from California Department of Fish and Game's Staff Environmental Scientist Jenny Marr as well as from Little Chico Creek Working Group's coordinator Ken Keller.

Furthermore, this project has greatly increased NCRLT's capacity to facilitate land conservation in the Little Chico Creek Watershed and elsewhere throughout the region. As mentioned above, providing appraisal services was a crucial first step in permanently protecting approximately 414 acres in the watershed and approximately two miles of riverine/riparian habitat along Little Chico Creek itself.

Finally, the overall success of this project has increased NCRLT's capacity in the sense that other landowners within the Little Chico Creek Watershed and other nearby watersheds have become aware of the work of both NCRLT and SNC in the surrounding region. Specifically, NCRLT was able to highlight the subject project through our outreach in other nearby watersheds through another project funded by SNC, the Tuscan Headwaters Project. This outreach was achieved in partnership with the following organizations:

- Battle Creek Watershed Conservancy
- Big Chico Creek Watershed Alliance
- Butte Creek Watershed Conservancy
- Deer Creek Watershed Conservancy
- Little Chico Creek Working Group
- Lower Feather River/Honcut Creek Watershed Group
- Mill Creek Conservancy
- Tehama County Resource Conservation District

## **Description of Project Accomplishments:**

### **1. Most Significant Accomplishment**

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

This grant resulted in the completion of four appraisal reports. The success of the completed reports is demonstrated by the landowners' desire to continue the process of selling conservation easements on their respective properties, resulting in a conservation easement acquisition proposal being accepted by WCB's Oak Woodlands Conservation Program.

### **2. WOW Factor**

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

Successful completion of the four appraisals in the Little Chico Creek Watershed has made the conveyance of four conservation easements totaling approximately 414 acres possible. These 414 acres will create a vital habitat linkage with approximately 176 acres that is already permanently protected and owned by the California Department of Fish and Game, resulting in the permanent protection of approximately 590 contiguous acres and approximately two miles of riverine/riparian habitat along Little Chico Creek. In addition, successful completion of the appraisal project has sparked interest in land conservation with other nearby landowners. These other interested landowners (labeled 'Wilhite Property' and 'Potential Future Acquisition') can be seen on the attached map following this report.

### **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?

Being able to provide appraisals at no cost to the subject landowners was a huge first step in NCRLT's overall conservation easement acquisition process. Without this project, it's unlikely that each of the subject landowners would have decided to move forward with the process of selling a conservation easement to NCRLT, thereby weakening any proposal for easement acquisition we could have submitted to a potential funder.

### **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 completion of the four, above-mentioned appraisal reports has provided NCRLT with the opportunity to continue the process of conservation easement acquisition on the four subject properties. Through the process, a fifth landowner near the project has begun the process of selling a conservation easement to NCRLT as well. Eventual completion of additional projects near the subject properties will give NCRLT the opportunity to expand upon the contiguous acres that have the potential to be permanently protected in the Little Chico Creek Watershed as a result of this project.

#### **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.

Using the subject grant funds, NCRLT was able to hire the appraisal services of Peter F. Brennan & Sons – Real Estate Appraisers & Consultants. Their importance to the project was demonstrated by their ability to produce quality appraisal reports in a timely manner.

#### **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.

This grant increased NCRLT's capacity in the sense that other landowners within the Little Chico Creek Watershed and other nearby watersheds have become aware of SNC's involvement and interest within our region. As a result, we were able to highlight the project through our outreach in other watersheds under the Tuscan Headwaters Project.

#### **7. Challenges**

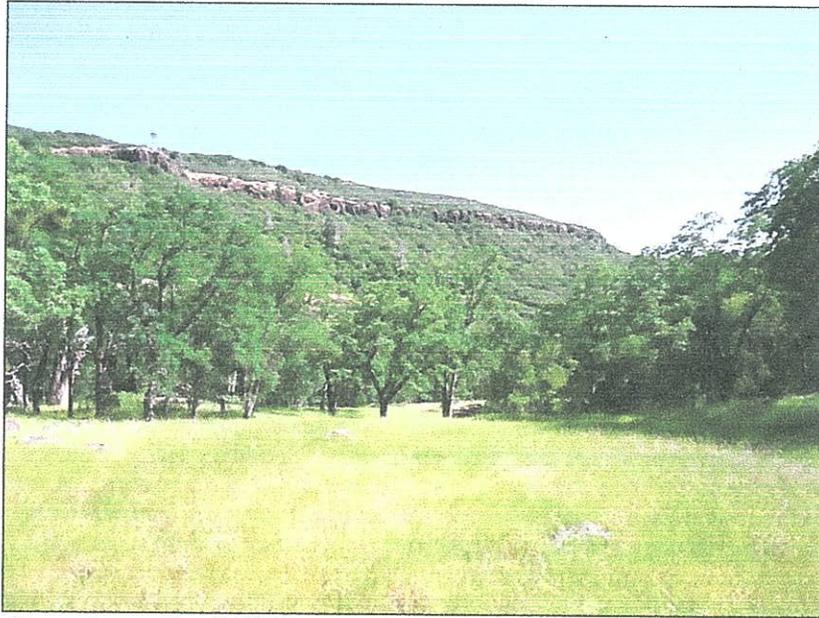
Did the project face internal or external challenges? How were they addressed? Describe each challenge and any actions that you took to address it. Was there something that SNC did or could have done to assist you? Did you have to change any of your key objectives in response to conditions "on the ground"?

The main challenge of this project has been indentifying available grant funds to complete the conservation easement acquisition on the four subject properties following the completion of the appraisals. NCRLT decided to submit a conservation easement acquisition proposal to WCB's Oak Woodlands Conservation Program.

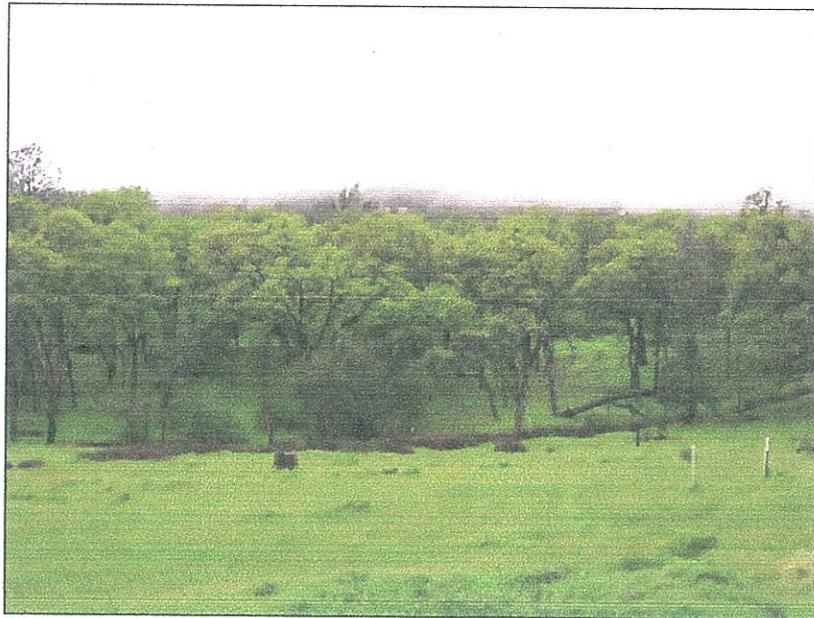
## 8. Photographs

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.

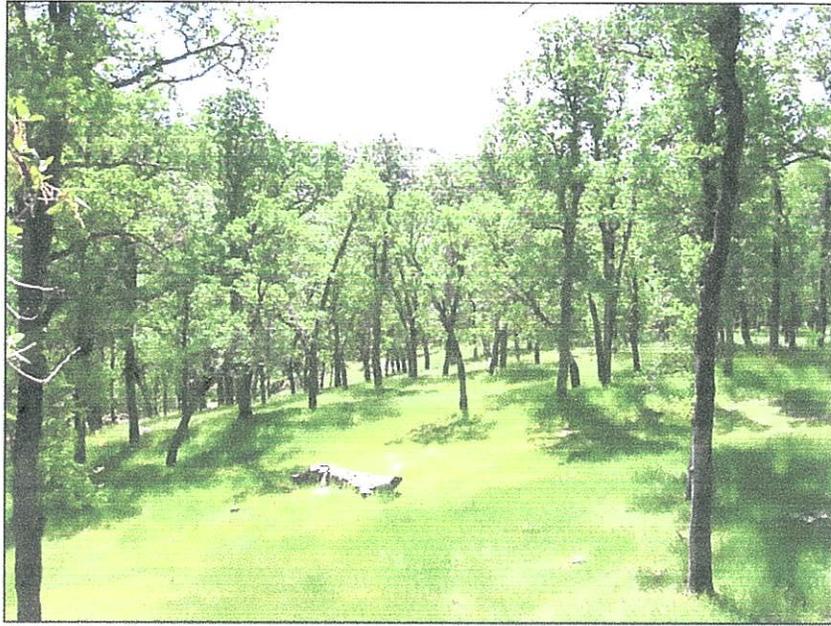
The following photos were taken while conducting site visits on the subject properties:



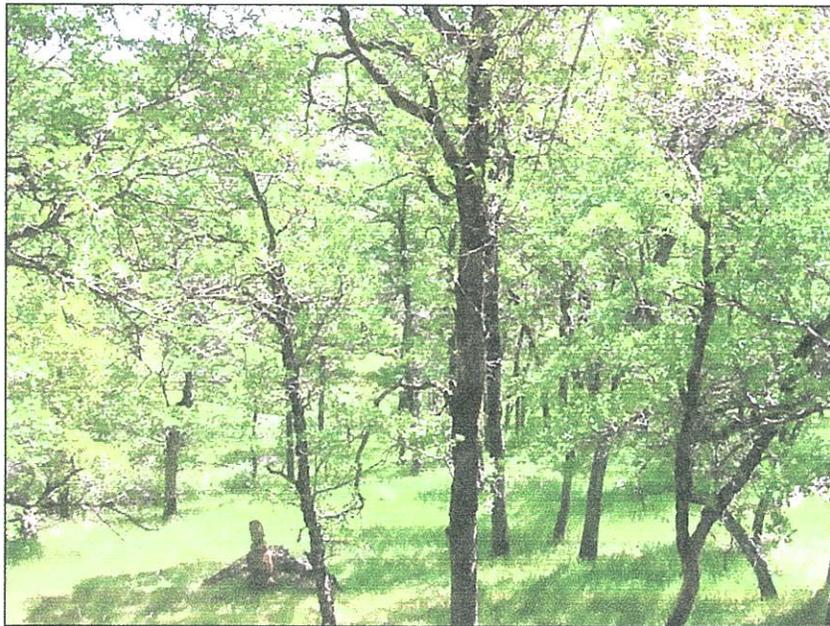
**Blue oak woodland, Mott property**



**Blue oak woodland, Mott property**



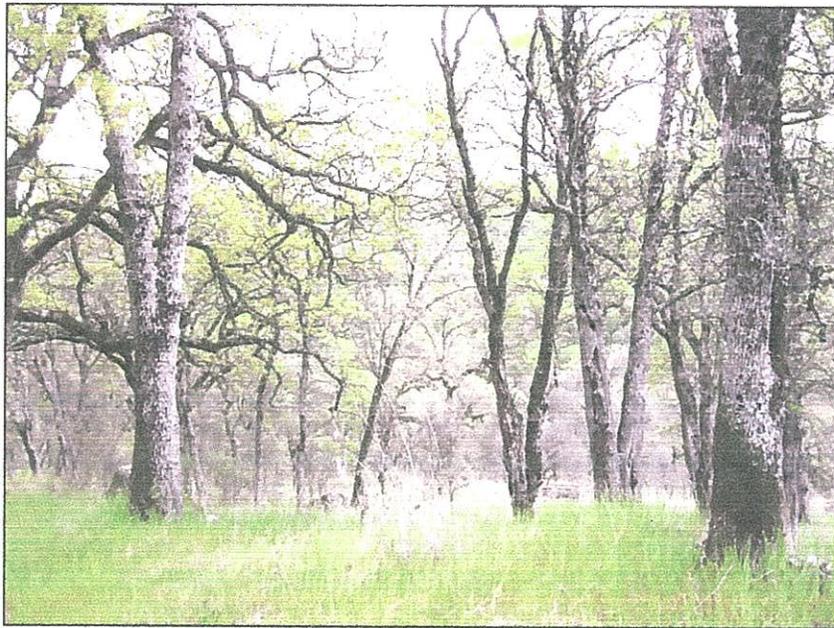
**Blue oak woodland, Smith property**



**Blue oak woodland, Smith property**



**Little Chico Creek, Brigham property**



**Blue oak woodland, Brigham property**

**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 post-grant plan for this project is to permanently protect four large, private properties totaling approximately 414 contiguous acres within the Little Chico Creek Watershed in Butte County.

**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.

Jamison Watts  
Northern California Regional Land Trust  
167 East 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue  
Chico, CA 95926  
(530) 894-7738

**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:

The successful completion of this project has given NCRLT the opportunity to leverage more funds via a conservation easement acquisition proposal to the WCB's Oak Woodlands Conservation Plan. If successful, the proposal will result in a grant of \$595,000 that will be used to complete the conservation easement acquisition on the subject properties.

2. Number and Diversity of People Reached:

By providing appraisal services, this project successfully reached the landowners of four separate but contiguous properties in the Little Chico Creek Watershed (Brigham, Caldwell & Martine, Mott, and Smith). Additionally, the project reached the organization that provided the appraisal services (Peter F. Brennan & Sons – Real Estate Appraisers & Consultants), as well as our watershed partners included in the Tuscan Headwaters Project.

3. Number and Type of Jobs Created:

Not applicable.

4. Number and Value of New, Improved or Preserved Economic Activities:

This project provided for appraisal services and the resulting reports for four separate properties. The cost of each appraisal was \$5,000 for a total of \$20,000.

With the resulting appraisals, NCRLT was able to submit a conservation easement acquisition proposal to WCB's Oak Woodlands Conservation Program. Should the proposal be successful, the following resources would be permanently preserved in the Little Chico Creek Watershed:

- four private properties totaling approximately 414 contiguous acres
- 348 contiguous acres of blue oak woodland and smaller patches of valley oak, black oak, interior live oak, oracle oak, canyon live oak, and scrub oak
- annual grassland, mixed chaparral, valley-foothill riparian, spring-fed wetlands
- approximately two miles of riverine/riparian habitat along Little Chico Creek

5. Number of Collaboratively Developed Plans and Assessments:

As mentioned above, this project resulted in the completion of four appraisal reports on four private properties. These appraisal reports are a necessary component in order for NCRLT to seek conservation easement acquisition funding for the subject properties. The results of the appraisal reports are below, and copies of each appraisal have been submitted with this Final Report.

Brigham Property

Market Value, Before Encumbrance: \$776,000  
Market Value, After Encumbrance: \$466,000  
Easement Value: \$310,000

Caldwell & Martine Property

Market Value, Before Encumbrance: \$200,000  
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Mott Property

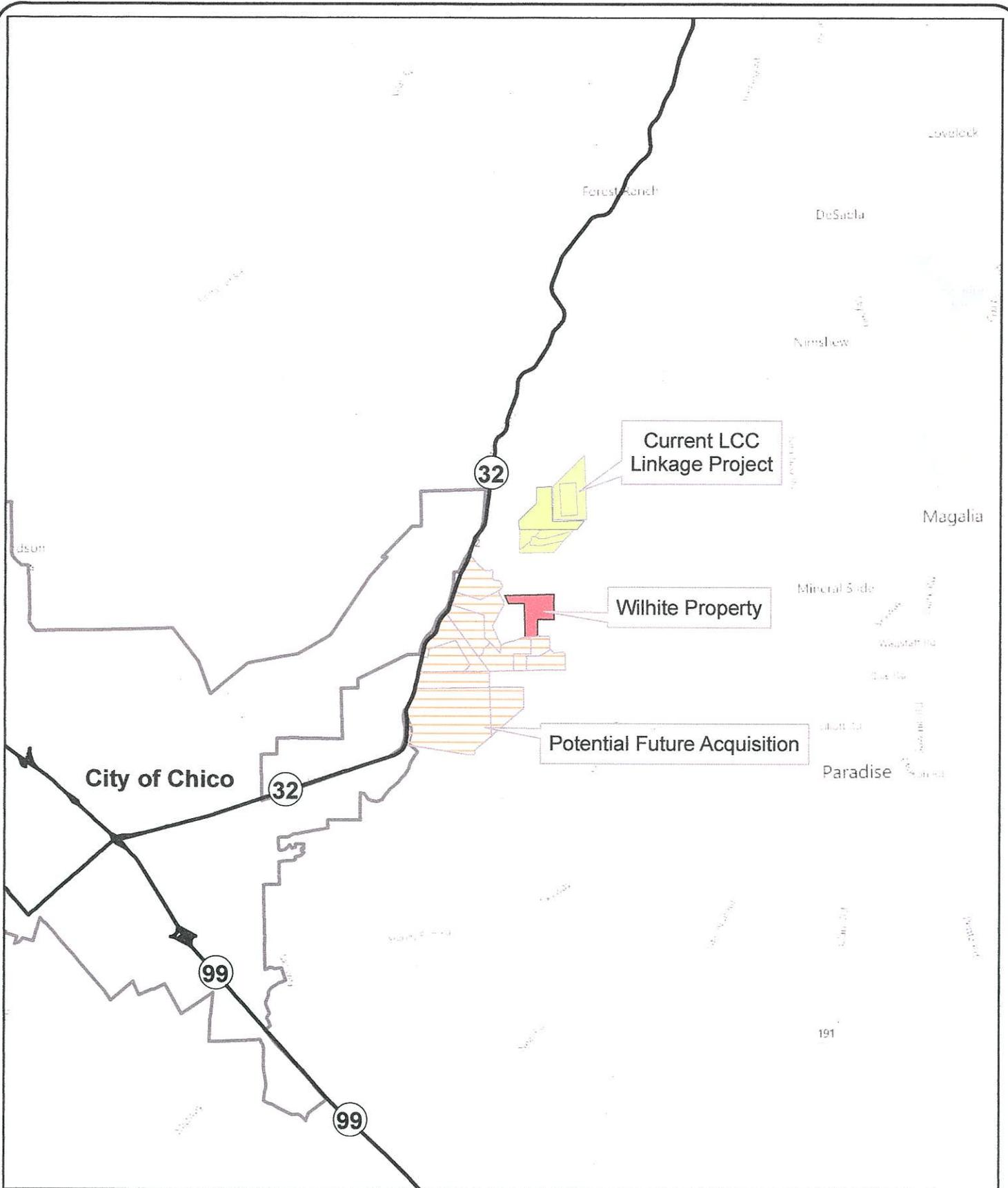
Market Value, Before Encumbrance: \$400,000  
Market Value, After Encumbrance: \$220,000  
Easement Value: \$180,000

Smith Property

Market Value, Before Encumbrance: \$150,000  
Market Value, After Encumbrance: \$105,000  
Easement Value: \$45,000

**ATTACHMENT I**

Map depicting other interested landowners near the subject landowners of this project



0 2 Miles  
 Date: 11/2/2011  
 Prepared by Dan Larson  
 Sources: Butte County, ESRI, and Tele Atlas.

- Wilhite Property
- Existing LCC Project
- Isom Property
- Chico SOI
- Major Roads
- DFG Property

## Little Chico Creek Linkage Project Wilhite



January 23, 2012

Angela Avery  
Sierra Nevada Conservancy  
11521 Blocker Drive, Suite 205  
Auburn, CA 95603

**RE: Final Invoice and Final Report for Grant Agreement # 446**

Dear Angela,

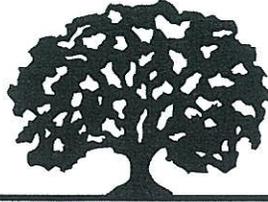
Please find enclosed the Final Invoice and Final Report for Grant Agreement #446. Let me know if you have any questions and/or concerns or require anything else.

Thank you for your support without which the Little Chico Creek Appraisal Project would not have been possible.

Thanks,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jamison Watts".

Jamison Watts  
Executive Director  
Northern California Regional Land Trust



NORTHERN CALIFORNIA  
REGIONAL LAND TRUST

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## LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

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February 17, 2012

Chris Dallas  
Sierra Nevada Conservancy  
11521 Blocker Drive, Ste. 205  
Auburn, CA 95603

**RE: Little Chico Creek Appraisals (SNC Agreement No. 446)**

Hi Chris,

Enclosed please find the four (4) appraisals that were omitted from the Final Report for SNC Agreement No. 446 (Little Chico Creek Appraisal Project).

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Zach Mendes', written over a horizontal line.

Zach Mendes  
Land Projects Coordinator  
[zach@landconservation.org](mailto:zach@landconservation.org)