

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 Freepackers Unit-Backcountry Horsemen of California

Project title: Kelty Meadow Campground Restoration and Facilities Improvement Project

SNC Reference Number: 607 **Submittal Date:** 8/24/2014

Report Preparer: Joyce Granger **Phone #:** 559-283-4058

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.)

		Date Event Occurred
Schedule work with permittee and BCHCSFP	August, 2012	September 4, 2012
Field Trip #1 (Pre-restoration tour)	August, 2012	September 4, 2012 site visit with USFS, BCHCSFP, Mike Knapp (permittee).
Procure and deliver materials	August - September, 2012	May 3, 2013 – Date is past expected date due to issues with procedure for obtaining funds through the SNC grant
Order and install interpretive signs	August, 2012	May 17, 2014 – Sign was installed after the grant work was completed in time for Final Outreach Event. BCHCSFP wanted to get needed approval from different groups that participated to use logos / review

		wording, etc. so that is why date is later.
Construct off-site water development (e.g. place spring box, trench/plumbing and trough)	August - September, 2012	July 26, 2013 – Installed solar water pump, plumbing and water trough with BCHCSFP, Offline Solar, CLM and USFS.
Outreach Event	Mid-September, 2012	August 12-15, 2012 – (3) Day Outreach event held at Kely Meadow Campground hosted by BCHCSFP. Event covered Leave No Trace principles, backcountry cooking and horse/mule packing clinic (handouts provided to attendees).
Install hitching rails	September - October, 2012	February 28, 2013
Stream channel restoration (e.g. harvest and plant sod plugs, native willow and place rock structures) (Phase 1)	September - October, 2012	September 20, 2012 – Phase 1 Willow planting done by BCHCSFP and USFS
6-month Report	January, 2013	Delay in implementation of project and receiving funds so no progress report was submitted for first 6 month. Accomplishments for this period were reported in July 2, 2013 Progress Report
Schedule work with permittee and BCHCSFP	May, 2013	May 2013
Field review of project status	May - June, 2013	July 25, 2013 – Field visit and work day with BCHCSFP, SNC and USFS. Bobby Kaminsky of SNC attended.
Construct fence enclosure	May - June, 2013	May 17, 2013 – Installed buck-and-pole riparian enclosure fence with BCHCSFP, Mike Knapp

		(permittee) and USFS..
Install bear boxes	July, 2013	June 25, 2013 - Refurbished and painted bear boxes (BCHCSFP) July 25, 2013 –Installed 12 bear boxes at each campsite with BCHCSFP, SNC (Bobby Kaminsky and dad) and USFS.
Six month progress report SNC	July, 2013	July 2, 2013
Conduct meadow condition and ecological status monitoring at plot in Kelty Meadow	August, 2013	July 20, 2013 – A previously established long term ecological condition and trend plot was measured at Kelty Meadow. The data from this monitoring shows that the condition is improving and in an upward trend due to the increase in late seral (desirable) herbaceous plant species present within the plot and a decrease in early seral (less desirable) species.
Complete stream channel restoration (harvest and plant sod plugs, native willow and place rock structures)	May, 2014	April 1-2, 2014 – Completed Phase II of the stream channel restoration by harvesting and planting sod plugs in greeline of stream channel and added erosion control cloth to bare soil areas where trail crossing used to be.
Outreach Event	May, 2014	May 17, 2014 – Outreach event held at Kelty Meadow Campground with the general public as the target audience. The agencies and groups that provided support letters for the project were invited to attend.

		Additional equestrian groups and other BCHC groups were invited as well. 50 people in attendance including the public, youth, BCHC and Forest Service and SNC representatives.
Field Trip #2 (Post-restoration tour).	June, 2014	August 29, 2014 – Post restoration field trip with BCHCSFP, SNC and USFS. Permittee visited site with BCHCSFP on August 15-16, 2014.
Final Payment/Final Payment Request	July 31, 2014	July 31, 2014
Final Report to SNC	July , 2014	August 24, 2014

From January 2014 to August 2014 the following was accomplished: Harvested and planted riparian vegetation sod plugs for stream channel restoration, conducted public outreach event in May 2014, and installed additional erosion control cloth in upper end of old trail crossing.

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.)

- Agency participation between Bass Lake Ranger District, Sierra Freepackers Unit Backcountry Horsemen of California and Sierra San Joaquin Unit Backcountry Horsemen of California
- Public Outreach Event held in May 17, 2014
- Completed 0.6 miles of stream channel improvement, restored 350 lineal feet of stream bank leading
- Restored and mitigated riding stock and cattle grazing impacts to aquatic and riparian habitat
- Improved meadow hydrologic function to conserve 8.7 acres in Kelty Meadow
- Improved and upgraded designated horse campground facility infrastructure by installing bear boxes and hitching rails

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.)

Opportunities: Utilizing the erosion control cloth had very positive and unanticipated recovery in the first season considering the limited rainfall last winter. These areas were covered in the fall of 2013 and by spring of 2014 had well established vegetation recovery. In the spring of 2014, the remaining eroded areas of the stream bank were covered with erosion control cloth and are expected to have the same positive re-vegetation results.

Challenges: Cattle are crossing and impacting the stream channel in the area above the riparian enclosure constructed through this Grant. To resolve this problem, an extension to the riparian enclosure was constructed to re-direct cattle to less sensitive areas and restrict access to the stream channel and mitigate impacts.

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

Educational demonstrations at the Outreach Event were well received and helped to raise public awareness on Leave No Trace principles. The event also contributed to increasing community awareness of the upgraded facilities now available at the campground. The hands on demonstrations provided helpful tips on safely handling stock and leading pack animals. The Outreach Event encouraged continued involvement by existing Sierra Freepacker Unit members and increased participation from new members.

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
Project materials and supplies	\$11,475.00	\$10,456.36
Maintenance materials and labor	\$300.00	\$0
GRAND TOTAL		\$10,456.36

Explanation: (if needed)

We came in under budget on both project materials and labor.

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.)

1. Resources leveraged in the Sierra Nevada: the purpose of this performance measure is to measure the additional resources generated as a result of SNC investment. The total value is based on matching funds provided by external, number of volunteer hours, and the value of major in-kind contributions made to the project:

Matching Funds Source	Description	Hours	Amount
BCHCSFP Unit	In-kind labor	1,532 @ \$24.75/hour	\$37,917.00
Aimee Smith, USFS Project Leader	In-kind labor and planning expertise	160 hours @ \$41.25/hour	\$6,600.00
Andy Stone, USFS Hydrologist	In-kind labor and planning expertise	32 hours @ 41.2/ hour	\$1,320.00
Leak Pen, USFS Assistant Recreation Officer	In-kind labor and planning expertise	32 hours @ 41.2/ hour	\$1,320.00
Total			\$47157.00

2. Number of people reached – Two outreach events held at Kelty Meadow Campground with the general public as the target audience. The first outreach event held at Kelty Meadow Campground hosted by BCHCSFP had 25 attendees and focused on the theme of Leave No Trace principles, backcountry dutch oven cooking and a horse/mule packing clinic (handouts were provided to attendees). The second outreach event hosted by BCHCSFP had 50 attendees including the public, youth, BCHC, Forest Service and SNC representatives. The theme of this outreach event was Leave No Trace principles, backcountry dutch oven cooking and a horse/mule packing clinic. The agencies and groups that provided support letters for the project were also invited to attend. Additional equestrian groups and other BCHC groups were invited as well.
3. Number of new, improved or preserved economic activities – [Types, quantities and where appropriate estimated dollar values]. Public outreach event raised awareness of the campground and what it has to offer resulting in an increase in public use, equestrian use, in particular. Kelty occupancy for 2012- Rented 1,397 campsites for 1,298 people. 2013 rented 1,617 campsites for 2,147 people. Seeing an upward trend in use

since improvements have been begun. Statistics for 2014 are not yet available. Through this grant, (12) bear boxes and (12) hitching rails were installed which augmented the existing infrastructure at the sites at Kelty Meadow Campground. The work done under this grant improved and preserved the value of this campground under contract through Sierra Land Management/California Land Management, which manages the campground including fee collection, under contract with the Sierra National Forest. Public outreach events raised awareness of the campground and what it has to offer resulting in an increase in public use, equestrian use, in particular. Kelty occupancy for 2012- Rented 1,397 campsites for 1,298 people. 2013 rented 1,617 campsites for 2,147 people. Seeing an upward trend in use since improvements have been begun. Statistics for 2014 are not yet available. The dollar value tied to this increased use would be reflected in the increased revenue received from the campsite fees collected by Sierra Land Management/California Land Management.

4. Linear Feet of Stream Bank Protected or Restored – Under this project, the stream channel conditions were improved through construction of a riparian enclosure and planting of native willow and riparian vegetation sod plugs. The project conserved 0.6 miles of stream bank (restored 350 lineal feet of stream bank), which is suitable habitat for Sierra Nevada yellow-legged frog, a federally listed species. The project restored and mitigated riding stock and cattle grazing impacts to the stream channel.
5. Acres of Land Improved or Restored - The project conserved montane wet meadow riparian habitat and improved meadow hydrologic function to conserve 8.7 acres in Kelty Meadow, which is suitable habitat for Great gray owl, a Forest Service sensitive species. Previous monitoring results from 2003 and 2008 showed the meadow to be in good condition with an upward trend in 2008 due to an increase of desired late seral vegetation species in meadow that are associated with stable or improving conditions. Monitoring conducted in 2013 show the meadow to be in excellent condition. The project prevented impacts to water quality degradation and has notably improved riparian vegetation species composition and cover along the stream channel.

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.)

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

The needed improvements focused on under this grant have been completed. The volunteers that implemented this grant have recognized additional areas that are in need of improvement to protect resources and water quality including the campground loop road and bathrooms. The volunteers in partnership with the Forest Service have requested that road work be completed along the campground loop to reduce erosion and improve vehicle access. Additional grant funding is also being pursued by the volunteers to purchase materials to replace the bathrooms at the campground, which are not up to standard and are in need of replacement.

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?)

The partnership between the Sierra Freepackers Unit of the Backcountry Horsemen of California and the Bass Lake Ranger District of the Sierra National Forest was bolstered as a result of this project and new proposals for this campground and other areas on the District are now being considered as a result of this strengthened working relationship. The Forest Service provided laborers (road and fire crews) to assist with delivery of materials to the project site. The permittee provided labor to construct the riparian enclosure and communication was improved as a result of this project. A local solar energy contractor provided expertise with the installation of the solar water pump and the system was designed simply with easy maintenance and technical support. A local feed store assisted with storing materials until the project could be accessed and assisted with loading and unloading materials when they were first delivered from out of the area.

Consultation with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) on this project has led to additional collaboration through increased membership enrollment and project expertise. The Sierra Freepackers Unit membership has doubled in size since the grant was awarded. Continued collaboration is on-going with the very active Sierra Freepackers Unit of the Backcountry Horsemen and the Bass Lake Ranger District through meetings, updates and communication with District specialists that have been previously involved with the grant proposal and implementation. The Sierra Freepackers Unit, in partnership with the Forest Service, is continuing to maintain riding trails in and around Kelty Meadow Campground and is pursuing additional grant opportunities to improve the campground.

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 installation of the solar livestock water development is the most significant accomplishment as a result of this grant, involving expertise from the local community and volunteers. The seemingly high tech approach, has been low maintenance and provides a clean source of fresh water to the livestock, readily available at close proximity to the campground, while eliminating the need for stock to go to the creek which had negative impacts to the stream bank, riparian vegetation and overall water quality.

2. WOW Factor

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

The vegetation recovery, including the success of the willow plantings, within the riparian enclosure and the passive restoration that resulted from restricting access to the stream bank is quite impressive, and an improvement was visually evident within a short time frame.

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?

One lesson learned was the importance of collaboration with contractors, agencies, specialists and volunteers that have experience with similar projects.

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 indirect benefit was the improved camping experience at the campground since it is easy to get water, stock can be easily tied to the hitching rails and proper food storage is encouraged with the bear boxes.

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.

The Sierra Freepackers worked under a volunteer agreement with the Forest Service. The Forest Service and the Sierra Freepackers worked together to develop the proposal for the grant and this arrangement made sure the project was being developed within the policies and constraints of the Forest Service (e.g. facility and planning requirements, restoration protocols for use of native species for re-vegetation, etc.).

Several equestrian groups were concerned about access to the stream channel and meadow under this project, as they had traditionally watered their horses at the stream crossing. The Sierra Freepackers Unit took the lead to communicate and educate other forest users on the need for the enclosure and on facilities, like the water trough, being provided to protect water quality and improve the camping experience at the campground.

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.

The Sierra Freepackers Unit of Backcountry Horsemen of California is a local unit under the regional division of Backcountry Horsemen of California, which is part of the Backcountry Horsemen of America (local chapters in every state).

The Sierra Freepackers Unit of the Backcountry Horsemen of California has been active for more than 20 years and this project has invigorated the participation within the Unit and expanded and doubled membership since the grant proposal was awarded in 2012. The Unit recognizes a greater need to educate and outreach to the public to increase awareness of the Backcountry Horsemen, its mission and how the group works to carry out its mission. The Unit's Board is talking about developing an executive Board as more members become actively involved with the Unit. For example, the Unit is considering a public lands liaison position and already has appointed a member to focus education and outreach at events. This project was highlighted at a Backcountry Horsemen Rendezvous held in March of 2014, where the public could see photos and a description of the project and could learn and ask questions and get information about the Sierra Nevada Conservancy and what it offers and also ask specific questions about the project and recreation opportunities on the Sierra National Forest.

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”?

Although we did not change our key objectives in response to conditions on the ground, we faced design challenges with the livestock water development that were addressed through additional consultation with a local contractor and the NRCS. This led to a change in the design for the water delivery from gravity fed to solar pump.

As a first time grant recipient, the Unit faced challenges with the reporting process and would have benefited from more direct assistance on these requirements once the grant was awarded. Even though information was available on the website, applying that information was sometimes difficult to interpret and comprehend.

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.

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?

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. Joyce Granger 559-283-4058