

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: **The Forest Foundation**

Project title: **The 2008 California Forestry Challenge**

SNC Reference Number: **SNC 070177** **Submittal Date:** 11/10/08

Report Preparer: Shaney Emerson **Phone #:** 1-866-241-8733

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

We have successfully completed our program for this year. The 2008 California Forestry Challenge was held October 1-4th at Sly Park Education Center in Pollock Pines. This year we had a record number of participants representing 13 counties. A total of 126 high school students and 26 teachers attended the event. Over 30 volunteers were organized to help deliver various aspects of the program. Prior to the event, many hours were dedicated to recruiting participants, planning instruction and finalizing logistics.

Wednesday, October 1st - Student teams arrived and were presented with the “Problem Solving Question” by a panel of natural resource professionals comprised of foresters from Cal Fire, private companies, and a Professor Emeritus – Ecosystem Sciences from UC Berkeley. The “problem” required the student teams to come up with a plan to manage a 1000 acre tract of forest for the next 70 years. Plans had to address wildfire risk, watershed health, sustainability of resources, conservation of wildlife habitat, economics and current California Forest Practice Rules. After this presentation students accompanied a wildlife biologist on a night hike to hoot for owls and also attended a workshop on how to prepare for the presentation that they would be giving on the final day.

Thursday, October 2nd – We spent the day at the following 4 field trip stops in the Ice House Reservoir Area:

- Tour of Sierra Pacific Mill in Camino – Students learned about the efficiency of mill operations due to new technology; a discussion on wood markets and green building materials followed.
- Forest Stop 1 – Students toured an area of forest that was replanted after the Ice House Fire; looked at species composition, and used wedge prisms to determine stocking density of trees.

- Forest Stop 2 – Students met with a wildlife biologist to learn about meadow and aspen restoration; teams constructed western blue bird boxes which will be installed in the area.
- Forest Stop 3 – Students met with a forester to see examples and learn why different silvicultural prescriptions are used. Students used densitometers to measure canopy coverage in a water course protection zone and learned about measures taken to protect watersheds and watercourses near roads and harvest areas.

All field trip stops were in the 1000 acre forest tract referred to in the problem solving question. The field trip was designed to address questions and data that teams needed to design their forest stewardship plans.

Friday, October 3rd – In the morning, students attended training sessions with resource professionals on forest ecology, plant identification, topographic map reading, and tree measurement. In the afternoon student teams completed field tests on the same topics included in the morning training session. At the end of the day, students had time to work on their presentations that would address the problem solving question.

Saturday, October 4th – Student teams presented their solutions to the problem solving question to a panel of judges. A career fair was set up in the cafeteria where students and teachers could gather information on natural resource college programs and careers. An awards ceremony concluded the event.

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.)

One outcome that we are very pleased to report is that our partnership with Shasta College allowed teams from Shasta, Trinity, Butte, and Tehama Counties to attend the Forestry Challenge for the first time in the six year history of the event. We also had a team travel from as far away as Palmdale. The number of students in attendance broke previous records. 126 student participants were well over our mark of 80 students last year.

We were fortunate to once again have volunteers from Cal Fire, UC Cooperative Extension, USFS and various private forestry companies. These professionals helped with field training and testing, field trip instruction, evening workshops, and judging of presentations.

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.)

Forest Foundation staff is committed to providing an educational experience that models real-world forestry issues. The positive response from students and teachers indicates that we are reaching this goal. This reputation has benefitted us by bringing in new participants and volunteers. Our evaluation system plays a large part in the quality of the program. Consulting with natural resource professionals and teachers for program ideas has helped us improve every year.

Challenges that we face involve avoiding scheduling conflicts with school programs such as SAT Testing, Homecoming, Sports, Future Farmers of America Competitions, etc. We lost a few participants this year due to these conflicts. We have taken steps to reserve lodging for the second week of October next year. With this change, we will not conflict with SAT Testing and an FFA Leadership conference, which are both held the first weekend of October every year.

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

We successfully met our goals.

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
Participant Lodging	21,000	19,026.00
Fieldwork Supplies/Tools	10,000	7,230.85
Charter Buses – Field Trip	4,000	3,990.81
GRAND TOTAL	\$35,000	\$30,247.66

Explanation: (if needed)

The actual amount spent on fieldwork supplies/tools was significantly less than our budget due to conservative spending. At one point we felt the number of participants would be a little higher, causing an increase in lodging and an additional bus rental. We tried to plan for the flexibility of being able to transfer unspent funds in the supplies category to lodging or buses if needed.

F. 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.)

Please see enclosed media coverage and photos. We will be posting additional photos and the Fox 40 News coverage on our website within the next month.

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

We have completed our 2008 event. We are starting to plan for our 2009 Forestry Challenge by looking at new fieldtrip areas and problem solving topics. We are planning to apply for grants from several different organizations.

Please Complete this Section for FINAL Report ONLY

Resources Leveraged: (What kind and amount of resources – funding or in-kind – outside of the SNC were you able to leverage, and how?)

In-kind contributions in the form of volunteers and loaned equipment came from the following agencies and businesses:

- ❑ UC Cooperative Extension, El Dorado Fire Safe Council, USFS -Eldorado National Forest, Sierra Pacific Industries – Camino Office, Cal Fire, Shasta College Natural Resource Program and various community members
- ❑ Many of these volunteers are people who have enjoyed being involved in previous years and return to help us each year. New volunteers were recruited by making presentations about the Forestry Challenge at agency or club meetings.

Funding Sources included:

- ❑ Wells Fargo Foundation, CJB & Associates, Amador El Dorado Forest Forum and GenCorp Foundation
- ❑ Grant applications were submitted to the Wells Fargo Foundation, and to Gen Corp. CJB & Associates and Amador El Dorado Forest Forum are groups that choose to make a yearly contribution to the program.

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?)

We were able to strengthen our existing partnerships with local industry and agencies by having them participate in the Forestry Challenge once again. Each year, these volunteers give us valuable feedback to help us improve the program. Their professional expertise lends a high level of credibility to the Challenge which keeps teams returning year after year, and also helps recruit new teams for the future, thus increasing our capacity to reach more students.

Our new partnership with Shasta College brought us almost 40 new students and 4 new teachers. This infusion of new schools is a positive development. We are hoping that these students return to their schools and recruit other participants from their areas next year. We are continuing to communicate with Shasta College in order to make this happen again.

Description of Project Accomplishments:

1. How did the Project succeed in accomplishing its intent?

Our goal was to provide an experience where students could gather information from professionals and hands-on activities to critically think through a problem involving natural resource management. Program success was evident as we watched students present their culminating

projects to a panel of judges at the end of the event. Feedback from judges indicated that students had come up with innovative ways to sustainably manage their tract of forestland. Teachers commented on how much harder their students worked in the field with hands-on tasks than back in the classroom. The before and after surveys showed a difference in what the participants knew about natural resources before and after the event.

We had a record number of attendees and many have expressed interest in returning next year. Some of the best informal assessments come from individual interactions that staff and volunteers have with participants throughout the Challenge. This information is passed along to us and we make adjustments as necessary.

2. Describe any follow-on or indirect benefits resulting from the Project.

We hope that our newly recruited schools will return next year with new and experienced students. Many teachers have asked to use our curriculum in their classes. We are thrilled that these lessons will be passed on to many students who were unable to attend the Challenge. Our relationship with Shasta College has led us to participate in some of the career outreach event that they hold on their campus.

3. Describe any significant experiences, unanticipated results or noteworthy events that create a “wow” factor.

The level of dedication to learning and being competitive amongst our participants is impressive. We were surprised when the majority of the teams asked for more time to prepare their presentations rather than go to the dance on Friday night!

We had a session called, “Ask a Forester” where student teams could schedule an appointment to ask a forester questions that pertained to their 70 year plan for managing their tract of forestland. Foresters and students both commented on the value of this time spent together. Foresters were impressed with the level of knowledge that students exhibited during their one-on-one conversations.

4. Describe any Lessons Learned.

We found that 125 students is a good number to work with. Any more than this would have been difficult to break down into smaller groups for field trips and hands-on training. We had originally set out to recruit the maximum number of students that could be housed at the facility. Now we know that 165 students would be too many to effectively work with.

Teachers shared great ideas to streamline different aspects of the event. One teacher suggested that we post YouTube videos on our website that show how to measure a tree and use the instruments that are required at the Challenge. This would allow first time participants to practice these skills before the Challenge. We plan to use this idea as we prepare for next year.

5. How do you intend to share the results of your work on this project?

We have asked participants to share their experience and knowledge by giving their presentations in their classes, at school board meetings, community service clubs and at Fire Safe Council meetings. We have plans for the 1st place team to present at various meetings.

News releases went out to local papers in the communities of participating schools. We are gathering photos from participants to post on the Forest Foundation web site. Fox 40 News also showed a brief piece on the Challenge during the evening news hour.

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

Resources Leveraged:

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- ❑ Resources leveraged as a result of this project involve the exposure gained for the event through media releases to local papers of participating teams and the Fox 40 News coverage. These will help us retain and recruit participants and volunteers for future years.

Collaboration Among Stakeholders:

- ❑ This event would not be possible if not for the efforts of our volunteers. We sincerely appreciate the professionals from multiple agencies and private companies that take part in the Forestry Challenge each year. Coordinating our volunteers is a big job. Approximately 30 people donate their time to make this event a high quality learning experience for our participants.

Capacity Building:

- ❑ We were able to strengthen our existing partnerships with local industry and agencies by having them participate in the Forestry Challenge once again. Each year, these volunteers give us valuable feedback to help us improve the program. Their professional expertise lends a high level of credibility to the Challenge which keeps teams returning year after year, and also helps recruit new teams for the future, thus increasing our capacity to reach more students.

- Our new partnership with Shasta College brought us almost 40 new students and 4 new teachers. This infusion of new schools is a positive development. We are hoping that these students return to their schools and recruit other participants from their areas next year. We are continuing to communicate with Shasta College in order to make this happen again.

One Page Description of Accomplishments:

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The overall outcome of the 2008 California Forestry Challenge is very positive. We are thrilled that so many students indicated an interest in pursuing a career in natural resources as a result of attending the Forestry Challenge. It is encouraging to see teams of students working hard throughout the course of the 4 day event. Our schedule is packed with activities and students keep working to stay engaged in the learning process. We were shocked that so many traded extra time to study and prepare for their presentations in exchange for a shorter dance on Friday night!

Providing students with an education in environmental science is key to enabling them to make informed decisions on natural resource issues that will become more important in the face of California's growing population, energy crisis and climate change issues. Providing a hand-on experience in the forest makes a big impact on students. If we do not allow students to experience California's abundant natural resources, they will not understand why it is so important for us to be good stewards of our land.

Number of Students:

- ❑ The 2008 California Forestry Challenge was held October 1-4th at Sly Park Education Center in Pollock Pines. This year we had a record number of participants representing 13 counties. A total of 126 high school students and 26 teachers attended the event. Over 30 volunteers were organized to help deliver various aspects of the program.
- ❑ Participating schools came from the following counties: Amador, Placer, Sacramento, Butte, Mariposa, Napa, Nevada, Los Angeles, El Dorado, Solano, Tehama, Shasta and Trinity.

Number of Participants who Better Understand Forest-Watershed Health Interactions and Land Management:

- ❑ For many of our participants, this was the first time that they have ever been on a trip to the forest to learn about forest stewardship. Pre and post-surveys showed that a number of students did not know that people have jobs that involve managing our natural resources or that there are laws in place to protect natural resources. By the end of the event, these students had done field work to collect data, visited a managed forest, worked with a wildlife biologist to build Western Bluebird boxes, met with foresters, and reviewed California Forest Practice Rules. Through informal conversations, student presentations and formal post-surveys we believe that all students left with a good understanding of the relationships between land management decisions and forest watershed health.