

# 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 Community Development Resource Agency

**Project title:** Side Hill Citrus Conservation Easement

**SNC Reference Number:** SNC 674                      **Submittal Date:** October 31, 2014

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**Check one:**     **6-Month Progress Report**  
                   **Final Report**

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

*Transactional documents associated with the acquisition of the conversation easement were completed. Several changes were made in the Easement language after review by the property owner and the Sierra Nevada Conservancy.*

*On Wednesday, October 22, 2014, Placer County's acquisition of the Side Hill Citrus Conservation easement closed escrow and the easement was recorded.*



- 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.)

*On September 10, 2013 the Placer County Board of Supervisors approved the material terms for the conservation easement and delegated authority to the Director of Facility Services to prepare and execute a conservation easement and related transactional documents.*

*The property owner, Richard Ferreira, completed a minor boundary line adjustment on the property in September 2013. The County approved the combining of the five current parcels into one parcel. This made for a cleaner easement transaction.*

- 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.)

*There was a delay in the transaction due to exceptions found on the title report for the five parcels. This took some time to resolve and get removed from the title. Two lenders had to rescind their deeds of trust.*

*In early 2014, the County requested and SNC agreed to extend the grant agreement period to November 1, 2015.*

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

*The County continues to pursue additional conservation easements on other agricultural properties.*

- 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>
Easement	\$185,000	\$185,000
Survey	\$0	\$0
Appraisal	\$0	\$0
Escrow/Title	\$0	\$0
Project Management	\$0	\$0
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>\$185,000</b>	<b>\$185,000</b>

**Explanation:** *SNC monies have been directly deposited into escrow.*

*The property easement was valued at \$305,000 by Bender Rosenthal Inc. The seller agreed to do a bargain sale of \$285,000. SNC contributed \$185,000 towards the purchase. The balance of the easement cost and transactional costs were paid for by the Emigrant Trails Greenway Trust (\$50,000), Placer Land Trust (\$6,900) and the Placer County Open Space Trust Fund (\$43,100 toward easement in addition to staff/transaction costs).*

**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.)

***Number of People Reached***

*Conservation of the Side Hill Citrus property is expected to reach and benefit thousands of people annually. Consumers are seeking cheaper and healthier fresh produce and “Buy Local” is a common refrain as more and more people view the local farm as a valuable asset. Additionally, organic foods are attracting an increasing loyal group of local customers as the benefits of eating healthier and supporting sustainable agriculture take hold. Side Hill Citrus sells to an estimated 3,500 consumers annually.*

*Before the end of 2014, a sign will be placed along Pleasant Hill Road identifying the property as being conserved under the Placer Legacy program with financial assistance from the Sierra Nevada Conservancy Ranches and Agricultural Lands Grant Program (and other project partners).*

***Dollar Value of Resources Leveraged for the Sierra Nevada***

*Leverage will be measured by project funds contributed by other sources, the value of the bargain sale agreed to by the seller, and in-kind staff time and other expenses provided by the County. The property owner, Placer Land Trust, Emigrant Trails Greenway Trust and the County have each contributed financial resources and/or in-kind services to this project, in addition to the Sierra Nevada Conservancy. Of the \$305,000 easement cost, \$185,000 was funded through the Sierra Nevada Conservancy grant and the \$120,000 balance, or nearly 40 percent, has been provided by project partners (Emigrant Trails Greenway Trust: \$50,000; Placer Land Trust: \$6,900; Placer County: \$43,100 plus staff and transaction costs).*

***Number and Type of Jobs Created***

*An easement at the Side Hill Citrus Orchard is expected to preserve the jobs of 12 employees that work on the site during peak harvest periods and three full-time, year-round employees. The easement will ensure that this land stays in agricultural production, and these employees remain working, over the long-term. As the orchard expands onto additional acreage and matures, there is the potential for employment growth.*

***Number of New, Improved or Preserved Economic Activities***

*Acquisition of the easement on the property allows for the continued operation of the Side Hill Citrus orchard and its economic activities. It is hoped that the easement encourages other farmers and ranchers to consider similar protection as an easement establishes the County’s desire to maintain the agricultural character of the Sierra foothills and support the existing agricultural infrastructure in Placer County.*

***Acres of Land Conserved***

*Through the easement, 47 acres of farmland is conserved in perpetuity along with 2150’ of riparian corridor.*

- 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.)

*None.*

## **Description of Project Accomplishments**

### ***Most Significant Accomplishment***

*Funding was used to purchase of an agricultural conservation easement on the 47-acre Side Hill Citrus farm, an organic mandarin and citrus orchard in the Sierra Nevada foothills. The orchard owner is requesting the County establish an agricultural conservation easement over the property in order to sustain the economic viability of organic farming on the property, to preserve the agricultural and ecological characteristics of the land in perpetuity, and to protect the property's riparian corridor from development and other harmful impacts.*

*The acquisition of this conservation easement provides the following key benefits:*

- Ensures that the property will be retained in its predominately agricultural condition and to preserve, protect, and maintain it in perpetuity.*
- Prevents any use of the property that will impair or interfere with its protected values, or impair the ability of the Ferreira estate to achieve specific agricultural and biological resources, goals, and objectives.*
- Implements a detailed conservation strategy, including land management practices.*

### ***WOW Factor***

*Besides the generous SNC grant award, the County is particularly pleased with the contributions from the Placer Land Trust and Emigrant Greenway Trust and the bargain sale from the property owner to complete this acquisition.*

### ***Indirect Impact***

*There has been other interest in conservation easements from property owners in Western Placer County. Many of these properties are grazed and/or contain grassland and vernal pool complexes however. Side Hill Citrus is the second working farm (non-grazing) protected under the Placer Legacy program. It is hoped that this easement and the previous easement on The Natural Trading Company farm will spur interest from other farmers in the benefits of conservation easements.*

### ***Collaboration and Conflict Resolution***

*Having funding partners was key to this project. The County has limited funding available for conservation projects. The Board of Supervisors has directed County staff to pursue public and private funding sources to collaborate on*

easements and property acquisitions such as the Side Hill Citrus project. Collaboration amongst each party involved in the transaction was excellent.

### **Capacity Building**

The County has the capacity to process easement acquisitions and has had full Board support for the Placer Legacy program. As a public entity, the process to obtain approvals can be time consuming and many of the property easements and/or acquisitions the County has participated in have been led by the Placer Land Trust. The working relationship between the County, the Placer Land Trust, and the Emigrant Trails Greenway Trust is good. The Placer County Facility Services Department – Property Management Division has the expertise to acquire easements and properties, perform due diligence, and close property transactions.

### **Challenges**

There were no internal or external challenges to report.

### **Photographs**

Site photos have been electronically forwarded to SNC.

If a ceremony is held at the site when the Placer Legacy/easement sign is in place, the County will forward pictures to the SNC.

### **Post Grant Plans**

There will be a press release regarding the purchase of the easement and once the Placer Legacy sign is completed and installed, a small ceremony with the Board of Supervisors and the property owner is likely.

The County continues to seek other agricultural property owners that may be interested in conservation easements.

Long-term, the County will monitor the conservation easement including an annual site visit.

### **Post Grant Contact**

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