

Background

In September 2012, staff identified seven programs that encompass the activities the Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) undertakes on behalf of the Region. These programs align with the SNC's mission and enabling legislation and provide a means to organize its activities in support of the seven subject matter focused program goals also included in its enabling legislation. These program areas are:

- Policy Development (State and Federal)
- Education and Advocacy
- Region-wide Projects
- Grants
- Collaborative Planning
- Technical and Other Assistance
- Research and Monitoring

In June 2013 the SNC Board approved the 2013-14 Action Plan, which includes the following major initiatives and projects to be undertaken by the SNC between July 2013 and June 2014, consistent with SNC's Strategic Plan:

- Grant Program
- Sierra Nevada Forest and Community Initiative (SNFCI)
- Biomass Utilization
- Abandoned Mine Lands
- Regional Agriculture and Ranching
- Regional Tourism and Recreation
- Ecosystem Services
- Education and Communications
- Great Sierra River Cleanup
- Pacific Forest and Watershed Lands Stewardship Council (Stewardship Council)
- Mt. Whitney Fish Hatchery
- Sierra Nevada System Indicators
- Internal Operations

Current Status

Today's report provides more detail regarding the SNC's overall budget and expenditures in the category of personal services and contracts, and focuses on aligning anticipated contract expenditures for Fiscal Year (FY) 2013-14 with the seven programs and the 2013-14 Action Plan noted above. Staff expects to present this information at the September meeting each year, following approval of the coming year's Action Plan in June.

Funding and Expenditures History

Program support funding has been very steady since the creation of the SNC in 2006, with a net gain of 6.4 percent over 6 years.

Fiscal Yr	Total Support Budget	% Chg Prior Yr
2007-08	\$4,458,000.47	
2008-09	\$4,499,556.49	0.9%
2009-10	\$4,459,155.46	-0.9%
2010-11	\$4,608,372.50	3.3%
2011-12	\$4,541,672.51	-1.4%
2012-13	\$4,591,450.55	1.1%
2013-14	\$4,744,000.00	3.3%
Net Chg	\$285,999.53	6.4%

The total support budget each year includes budgeted amounts and expenditures for staff salaries, wages and benefits (personal services), as well as various categories of general expenditures called operating expenses and equipment (OE&E). Operating expenses and equipment expenditures include general operating expenses (e.g., office rent and supplies, utilities, printing, meeting space, event sponsorships, travel, training, equipment, vehicle expenses, and various control agency charges), as well as two contracts categories (interagency agreements and external contracts).

In the early years, personal services costs ran lower than OE&E, since staffing started slowly and ramped up over time. Contracting services ran higher in these developmental years since staffing and services were borrowed from other organizations to assist in establishing the SNC. Predictably, personal services spending has increased as a percentage of the overall support budget, while contracting has decreased. In FY 2007-08, personal services constituted 47 percent of the total budget, while contracts came in at 39 percent. As of FY 2012-13 personal services ran at about 55 percent of the total support budget, with contracts at about 25 percent. In FY 2013-14, SNC anticipates personal services to increase to 61 percent (\$2.9 million), and contracts expenditures to fall to 20 percent (\$952,000) of the total support budget (with general operating expenses as defined above constituting the remaining 19 percent). These most recent increases in personal services are due primarily to the end of the furlough program, re-classifications, promotions and pay increases.

Alignment of Planned Expenditures with Programs and 2013-14 Action Plan

The potential contracts expenditures for FY 2013-14 are noted below. Staff is continuing to prioritize this list of potential activities, given that available SNC funding will not meet all of the identified need. Many of these projects will be developed as Interagency Agreements, tapping into the resources of other State organizations. Some may be proposed for academic and other governmental organizations, and others may be opened for bidding by private contractors to provide the identified expertise and consulting services.

Funding expenditures are estimated; funding levels may be adjusted as projects are developed to align with funding availability.

Statutory Program Category	2013-14 Action Plan Initiative/Activity	2013-14 Project	Funding Level
<i>Policy Development (State and Federal)</i>	<i>Ecosystem Services</i>	<i>Mokelumne Avoided Cost Analysis*</i>	\$50,000
<i>Policy Development (State and Federal)</i>	<i>Biomass Utilization</i>	<i>Bioenergy Technical Support*</i>	\$25,000
<i>Education and Advocacy</i>	<i>Education and Communication</i>	<i>Outreach Materials (Design and Printing)*</i>	\$40,000
<i>Education and Advocacy</i>	<i>Education and Communication</i>	<i>Sierra Legislative Conference*</i>	\$20,000
Region-wide Projects	Regional Tourism and Recreation	Geotourism Support	\$98,000
<i>Region-wide Projects</i>	<i>Multiple Initiatives</i>	<i>Americorps/Students*</i>	\$64,000
<i>Region-wide Projects</i>	<i>Abandoned Mine Lands</i>	<i>Abandoned Mine Lands Initiative Support*</i>	\$50,000
Grants	Grant Program	2013-14 Grant Round Support (Technical Advisors and CEQA Services)	\$77,500
Grants	Grant Program	Grants Data Management System	\$50,000
<i>Grants</i>	<i>Grant Program</i>	<i>Prop 84 Grants Support*</i>	\$108,000
<i>Collaborative Planning</i>	<i>SNFCI</i>	<i>SNFCI Collaborative Support*</i>	\$100,000
<i>Research and Monitoring</i>	<i>Regional Agriculture and Ranching Initiative</i>	<i>Rangeland Research*</i>	\$20,000
Multiple Categories	Multiple Initiatives	General Support Projects	\$90,000
N/A	Internal Operations	General Support Projects	\$223,000
		Total	\$1,015,500

*Projects noted in *italics* are still under consideration (\$477,000). All other projects have been approved.

Note: the final two entries in this table include general support projects, one that helps to implement multiple statutory program categories, and one within the Action Plan initiative of Internal Operations. Activities within the multiple initiatives grouping include legislative information services, miscellaneous technical assistance, and funding - and project-development support activities. Activities within Internal Operations include accounting and legal services, control agency fees and general information technology services such as network, GIS (mapping) and SharePoint support.

Recommendation

This is an informational item only; no formal action is needed by the Board at this time, although Boardmembers are encouraged to share their thoughts and comments.