

WELCOME

TO THE FOURTH

**SIERRA NEVADA
CONSERVANCY
Board Meeting**

**Friday December 2, 2005
10:00 am**

**RESOURCES BUILDING
1416 NINTH STREET
1ST FLOOR AUDITORIUM
SACRAMENTO, CA 95814**

NOTICE OF PUBLIC MEETING

**SIERRA NEVADA CONSERVANCY BOARD MEETING
FRIDAY, DECEMBER 2, 2005, 10:00 a.m**

LOCATION:
RESOURCES BUILDING
1416 Ninth Street
1st Floor Auditorium
Sacramento, CA 95814

BOARD AGENDA

- I. Call to order**
- II. Roll call**
- III. Approval of 9/29/05 meeting minutes**
- IV. Chairman's report**
 - A. Report on board action taken at the 9/29/05 meeting to appoint an Executive Officer (Government Code section 11125.2)
 - B. Expiring terms of representatives for the North, South Central, and South subregions (Public Resources Code sec. 33322(b)(2))
- V. Deputy Attorney General's report**
- VI. Staff report**
 - A. Executive Officer introduction
 - B. Staffing plan
 - C. Agreements and contracts
 - D. Sierra Nevada Conservancy logo
 - E. Proposed board meeting schedule for 2006

- VII. Consideration and possible adoption of a general delegation of authority to the Executive Officer**
- VIII. Discussion and possible action on a proposed 2006 strategic program planning process and timeline**
- IX. Discussion and possible action on proposed process and timeline for selection of Conservancy headquarters office**
- X. Final report on the 2005 sub-regional outreach sessions**
- XI. Board member comments**
- XII. Public comments**
- XIII. Administrative matters**
- XIV. Adjournment**

Staff reports on individual agenda items requiring board action may be obtained at the Conservancy's office beginning on the Monday preceding the meeting or at the board meeting. For more information, write to: Sierra Nevada Conservancy, 1416 Ninth Street, Rm. 1311, Sacramento, CA 95814, or call Eileen Pope at (916) 653-6403.

Closed Session: Following or at any time during the meeting, the Conservancy may recess or adjourn to closed session to consider pending or potential litigation; property negotiations; or personnel-related matters. Authority: Government Code Section 11126(a), (c)(7), or (e).

NOTES:

This meeting notice may be viewed on the Internet at www.sierranevada.ca.gov.

In accordance with Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, reasonable accommodations are available. Requests for reasonable accommodations should be made at least five working days in advance of the meeting date. To request reasonable accommodations, including documents in alternative formats, please call (916) 653-6403.

SIERRA NEVADA CONSERVANCY PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES
THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 29, 2005

LOCATION:
RESOURCES BUILDING
1416 Ninth Street
1st Floor Auditorium
Sacramento, CA 95814

9/29/05 BOARD MINUTES

- I. **Call to Order** - Chairman **Mike Chrisman** called the meeting to order at 8:15 a.m. He announced that the Speaker of the Assembly appointed John Brissenden to the board.
- II. **Swearing in of new Board Member(s)** - Deputy Attorney General **Christine Sproul** indicated that the swearing in of the new board member would take place later in the day.
- III. **Roll call** - All members were present except for the Department of Finance representative, and the Federal Advisory Liaison, Bernie Weingardt (USFS) and Dean Swickard (BLM). Brent Handley (USFS) attended for Mr. Weingardt.
- IV. **Approval of the minutes of the June 30, 2005 meeting** - Lee Stetson moved approval of the minutes as submitted, _____ seconds. Motion passed without objection.

V. Deputy Attorney General's Report – Ms. Sproul discussed the rules related to closed session. She explained that the Bagley - Keene Open Meeting Act specifies that the agency must first convene in open session and then go into closed session. After the closed session, the Chair must open the meeting to the public. This must be included in the meeting notice and agenda. If decisions are made, in closed session, those decisions must be announced in the subsequent open meeting (except decisions relating to personnel matters). She cautioned the board members that the content of a closed session is confidential, and should not be disclosed outside of this board.

Ms. Sproul also stated that a preliminary version of a conflict of interest code for the Conservancy had been prepared and was in the board packets, along with reporting requirements for board members, and statements of economic interest.

VI. Administrative Report

a. **Dave Willis** reported that staff had completed the process for selection of an Administrative Officer and were prepared to recommend a candidate to the new Executive Officer. He reported that staff had collected applications for the Executive Secretary position and that the applicants can be interviewed by the new Executive Officer.

He also reported that the Conservancy will utilize the same position classifications as the Coastal Conservancy program staff. It would take a year to create a new classification: whereas using Coastal Conservancy classifications bypasses that process and allows hiring to begin sooner. In response to a question by Mr. Waterston, He explained that the Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) will not be involved directly with the Coastal Conservancy, just using their classifications. The SNC will do its own testing and hiring. Ms. Arcularius asked if the job descriptions were satisfactory and Mr. Willis said that they were.

In response to a question by the Chairman, Mr. Willis described the Administrative Officer position as one that is at the first level of supervisor. The Administrative Officer would be responsible for all administrative matters, such as budgeting, personnel, procurement, etc.

Mr. Willis also reported that staff has submitted the paperwork (Form 9) to Department of General Services to begin the process of finding a headquarters site, but that advertising for a site will not take place until after the next board meeting in December.

- b. **Ray Lacey** reported that SNC has completed five of six subregional outreach meetings. Dates and locations of the session are listed on the web site. The final outreach meeting will be held in Quincy on October 6. In terms of persons who want to see more informal outreach opportunities he has told them these will be available. The outreach sessions have revealed that many people have an enormous eagerness to participate. There is great diversity of issues, concerns and stakeholders. The local people have the knowledge about their subregions and are ready to talk in depth, wanting to take into consideration existing plans needing to be implemented. One interesting point regarding technical support of the intention was to explain, the kinds of technical support that the SNC would offer. However, what is happening in all communities is that they are coming to “us”, explaining what they can bring to the SNC.

These meetings have been a great bridge - builder, and it is turning into a two - way street. We have received much encouragement for conducting strategic planning before jumping into further activities. Geography is a huge challenge: the locally based players must be integrated into the process working with the region. The procedure for reporting back to them is unresolved. People want to know what information is available, and when, raw data from the outreach sessions will be assembled for the next

SNC meeting. There is a great interest on the part of the communities to see the data and share specifics. Staff has prepared a brochure with frequently asked questions; there are copies ready for board members to take back to their regions. We want consistent and valid information to be given out.

- VII. Proposed Delegation of Authority to Chairman-Dave Willis** explained that the proposed resolution would give the Chairman the authority to enter into limited contracts with other state agencies, as well as outside providers, for various types of services. Bob Kirkwood moved approval of the following resolution; the resolution was seconded by Linda Arcularius and passed without objection.
- VIII. Proposed Conflict-of-Interest Code - Christine Sproul** recommended authorizing a process to prepare for adoption of a conflict of interest code. She pointed out that member's packets included a description of the proposed code in draft form and a copy of the Fair Political Practices legislation. She stated that the code will let sunshine in on the Board's proceedings and she asked that the Board approve initiating the process. It was moved by Bob Kirkwood and the motion was seconded by Helen Baumann to authorize the staff to proceed with the rulemaking process regarding conflict of interest. The motion passed without objection.
- IX.** Public comments -The Chairman asked for public comments at this time and there were none.
- X.** Executive Officer Search - **Christine Sproul** suggested that there be a short general summary of the process be given by the Executive Officer Search Committee. (Linda Arcularius & Bob Kirkwood) Linda Arcularius commended the committee and staff for the work done to date. Bob Kirkwood stated that there had been only a paper review thus far: the committee had compared the candidate's resumes against the established criteria. The committee was very pleased

with the quality of the pool of candidates and especially with those selected for further interview with the Board.

- XI. CLOSED SESSION** - Chairman Chrisman called the meeting into closed session at 9:00 AM for consideration of the appointment of an Executive Officer.

Chairman Chrisman reconvened the open session at 3:40 p.m., stating that he had been authorized by the board to offer the Executive Officer position to a person. He also mentioned that he appreciated the hard work of the staff, Crawford Tuttle and Dave Willis, and of the Search Committee, (Linda Arcularius and Bob Kirkwood), and thanked them on behalf of the board.

- XII. Board member comments**-There were no board member comments.

XIII. Administrative matters

- a. The Chairman gave a reminder that the next full meeting of the Board would be Friday, December 2. The meeting would tentatively, be held in Sacramento.

Several Board members indicated they did not prefer a Friday meeting, and asked if it could be changed.

The Chairman mentioned the December 8th or 9th, but some members could not make those two dates. Mr. Chrisman indicated that he would soon be in touch with the board on the date, time and location.

- XIV. Adjournment** - The Chairman adjourned the meeting at 3:50 P.M.

Sierra Nevada Conservancy
Board Meeting
December 2, 2005

Agenda Item IV. B
Expiring Terms

33322. Members and alternates, if any, shall serve terms specified as follows:

(a) The members appointed pursuant to subparagraphs (C) to (E), inclusive, of subdivision (a) of Section 33321 shall serve at the pleasure of the appointing power.

(b) The members and alternates, if any, appointed under subparagraph (F) of paragraph (1) of subdivision (a) of Section 33321 shall serve, as follows:

(1) Members and alternates in the north Sierra subregion, the central Sierra subregion, and the east Sierra subregion shall have terms beginning on January 1 in an odd-numbered year and ending on December 31 of the following even-numbered year. All terms shall be for two years.

(2) Members and alternates in the north central Sierra subregion, the south central Sierra subregion, and the south Sierra subregion shall have terms beginning on January 1 in an even-numbered year and ending on December 31 in the following odd-numbered year. Members and alternates who are initially appointed to the board shall serve for a one-year term for the first year. Subsequent terms shall be for two years.

(c) No member of the board, whose appointment to the board was contingent upon meeting a condition of eligibility under this division, shall serve beyond the time when the member ceases to meet that condition.

**DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY
TO THE EXECUTIVE OFFICER OF THE
SIERRA NEVADA CONSERVANCY**

REQUESTED ACTION:

Delegation of authority to the Executive Officer to administer and conduct the regular affairs and responsibilities of the Conservancy, including express authority in enumerated areas.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the Sierra Nevada Conservancy adopt the following resolution pursuant to Sections 33300 et seq. and 33328 of the Public Resources Code:

“The Sierra Nevada Conservancy hereby delegates to the Executive Officer the authority to administer the regular and day-to-day affairs and responsibilities of the Conservancy, including the functions and powers specified below, as necessary or appropriate for the sound management of the agency. The authority delegated herein shall be carried out in a manner consistent with applicable laws and regulations, State procedures, and Conservancy policies.

“The Executive Officer may delegate to other staff any part of his or her functions, powers, or authority, but the Executive Officer shall at all times be responsible for assuring that the affairs of the Conservancy are fully and faithfully discharged.

“The foregoing delegation to the Executive Officer includes the authority:

1. To appoint other Conservancy staff; to assign duties and functions to staff; to establish procedures governing staff

operations; and to administer all Conservancy personnel matters.

2. To administer and oversee the Conservancy's budgetary and fiscal affairs, subject to the right of the Conservancy board to review and approve the proposed annual budget.
3. To execute contracts and other instruments or documents on the Conservancy's behalf, as necessary in order to carry out the resolutions of the Conservancy board or any other authority delegated herein.
4. To administer and manage all real and personal property within the Conservancy's ownership or control; and to enter into agreements for the management of property owned or controlled by the Conservancy, including construction or maintenance of Conservancy facilities, *provided that*, prior to the execution of such agreements, the Conservancy shall have authorized the expenditure of funds for the purpose.
5. To enter into contracts for technical or other services, as needed for the purpose of program and project development by the Conservancy or by eligible grantees, in amounts not to exceed \$50,000 per contract, including extensions and amendments (or such other amount as may hereafter be authorized by the Conservancy).
6. To expend funds for the leasing of office space, for purchase or leasing of equipment and for procurement of other materials, supplies, and technical services, as necessary or appropriate to meet the ongoing needs of administration.
7. To apply for funds for the support of the Conservancy's programs and projects; to negotiate and enter into agreements to accept funds, to make representations in support of such applications or agreements, to assign or accept the assignment of grant funds and applications, and to meet agreed conditions; *provided*, that (a) all

expenditures not previously authorized by the Conservancy, or within the Executive Officer's delegated authority, shall remain subject to Conservancy authorization; and (b) any agreement which, at the time it is executed, requires further Conservancy authorization before it can be implemented, shall be rescindable in the Conservancy's sole discretion and without liability to the Conservancy.

8. To prepare and issue public notices of Conservancy board meeting, and meeting agendas.
9. To place on the Conservancy's consent calendar (if any) matters which the Executive Officer believes to be non-controversial, subject to the right of any Conservancy board member to remove any item from the consent calendar, and subject to such other direction as the Conservancy may provide from time to time.
10. To reimburse members of the Conservancy board and members of advisory boards or committees established by the Conservancy, for their actual and necessary expenses, including travel expenses, incurred in attending board or committee meetings or in carrying out the other duties of their office; and to arrange for compensation to be paid, in the statutory amount, to members of the Conservancy who are entitled to compensation for attending meetings of the board.
11. To make determinations regarding the applicability of exemptions from the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA); and to prepare, circulate and file all documents which are necessary to comply with CEQA, *provided*, that the Conservancy reserves the authority to review, certify and adopt necessary findings in connection with environmental impact reports and negative declarations.

12. To provide and make available technical information, expertise, and other non-financial assistance to public agencies, nonprofit organizations, and tribal organizations to support program and project development and implementation.
13. With respect to any grant or other action previously authorized by the Conservancy, in order to carry out the purposes of the authorization:
 - a. to substitute grantees.
 - b. to redirect incoming or outgoing grants, grant applications and related instruments;
 - c. to modify or assign grant agreements and contracts;
 - d. to authorize Conservancy grantees to accept from or convey to other appropriate entities, on appropriate terms, leases, licenses, easements, options, and similar instruments or interests;
 - e. to exercise a power of termination, pursuant to Public Resources Code section 33344(e), on account of a grantee's breach of a material term or condition in a Conservancy grant for acquisition of real property; or to trigger the re-vesting of title to real property acquired through a Conservancy grant for acquisition of real property, pursuant to Public Resources Code section 33344(f), on account of the grantee organization going out of existence;
 - f. to designate the entity which will receive an interest in real property, pursuant to the exercise of a power of termination under Public Resources Code section 33344(e) or the re-vesting of title to property under Public Resources Code section 33344(f).

14. To prepare, certify, and file documents pertaining to the adoption, amendment or repeal of regulations, as necessary to support the rulemaking activities and actions of the Conservancy.

15. To oversee the management of the Conservancy's records, and to respond to requests for inspection or copies of Conservancy records under the California Public Records Act.

16. To represent the adopted positions of the Conservancy, or, in the absence of such adopted positions, the views of the Conservancy staff, in communications with the Legislature, other public entities, and the public.

17. In coordination with the Office of the Attorney General, or other duly approved counsel:

- a. to defend against any legal actions brought against the Conservancy;
- b. as necessary in order to protect Conservancy property or other interests against damage or loss, and with prior notification to the Conservancy, to file and prosecute legal actions on the Conservancy's behalf; and
- c. to settle small claims court actions on the Conservancy's behalf, *provided*, that the Conservancy shall be notified of any such settlement no later than the following Conservancy board meeting.

18. With respect to monetary or nonmonetary claims arising outside of litigation: to grant, deny, settle or compromise such claims if they are brought against the Conservancy; and to pursue, settle, or compromise such claims if they are brought on the Conservancy's behalf; subject to such dollar limits as the Conservancy may, by resolution, require for specific categories of claims.

19. To designate a member of the staff to serve as Acting Executive Officer, or one or more members of the staff to perform specified functions of the Executive Officer, in the event that the Executive Officer is absent or becomes unable to perform his or her regular duties. In the event of the death or incapacity of the Executive Officer, any such designation shall survive, unless it expires by its own terms, or is rescinded or modified by the Conservancy board.”

Proposed Strategic Program Planning Process

A strategic program plan will be developed to guide the ongoing operations of the Conservancy over the next 3 to 5 years. The Strategic Plan, required under Public Resources Code section 33345, will be developed in consultation with various governmental and non-governmental stakeholders through an open, public process. The plan should be completed so that the Board may consider action by no later than July of 2006. Once the Strategic Plan is adopted, annual plans consistent with the Strategic Plan and available resources available can be developed for each fiscal year.

In development of the various strategies and actions necessary to carry out the mission of the conservancy, the following guiding principles, set forth in the Legislature, should be met:

- (1) Support efforts that advance both environmental preservation and the economic well-being of Sierra residents in a complementary manner.
- (2) Work in collaboration and cooperation with local governments and interested parties in carrying out the Conservancy's mission.
- (3) Make every effort to ensure that, over time, conservancy funding and other efforts are spread equitably across each of the various sub-regions and among the stated goal areas, with adequate allowance for the variability of costs associated with individual regions and types of projects.

The Strategic Plan will provide strategies and actions to accomplish each of the following seven objectives:

- (1) Provide increased opportunities for tourism and recreation.
- (2) Protect, conserve, and restore the region's physical, cultural, archaeological, historical, and living resources.
- (3) Aid in the preservation of working landscapes.
- (4) Reduce the risk of natural disasters, such as wildfires.
- (5) Protect and improve water and air quality.
- (6) Assist the regional economy through the operation of the conservancy's program.
- (7) Undertake efforts to enhance public use and enjoyment of lands owned by the public.

The substantial public input received through the six public workshops held earlier this year will provide the foundation for development of the initial draft of the plan. The strategic plan will provide specific strategies and actions necessary to achieve measurable progress in each of the areas described above, including the identification of the highest priority projects and initiatives for which funding is needed. Performance measurements shall be established for each program area.

The Conservancy will engage the services of a strategic planning consultant to coordinate the planning process, with a preference for businesses with experience in Sierra Nevada issues and region. The Conservancy will seek assistance from local, state and federal agencies in the development of the strategic plan.

Following the release by the Board of a "preliminary draft," a series of public workshops will be held throughout the region to allow the public an opportunity to provide input into the proposed plan. In addition, comments will be solicited through the Conservancy website. Progress reports will be given at each Board meeting.

Proposed Process for Selection of Location for
Conservancy's Headquarters Office

Public Resources Code 33327 requires that the Conservancy establish a headquarters in the region. In order to effectively carry out its mission and in order to proceed with the hiring of permanent staff, it is important that the Conservancy initiate a process that will result in the selection of a headquarters as soon as practicable. The process must allow communities with an interest in becoming home to the Conservancy an opportunity to provide information as to the benefits of locating the headquarters in their community.

Following Board approval of the proposed process, the Department of General Services (DGS) will release an advertisement for office space to accommodate the Conservancy's needs, consistent with the minimum requirements described below and other state requirements. The advertisement will be distributed to all local government entities, media outlets and other interested parties within the proposed target area. Information on the process will also be made available on the SNC website. Based on the communities expressing interest in being home to the Conservancy, communities will be evaluated and ranked by the Conservancy, in coordination with DGS, based on the criteria below.

Office Location Criteria

Minimum Requirements

- Located within one of the following counties: Amador, Butte, Calaveras, El Dorado, Mariposa, Nevada, Placer, Plumas, Sierra, Tehama, Tuolumne and Yuba.
- No more than 2 hours travel time to Sacramento.
- Year round access to office.

Preferences

- Availability of interim and/or permanent office space (including the option of a “build to suit” building).
- Access to major north-south and east-west transportation corridors (I-5, Hwy 99, Hwy 395, I-80, Hwy 50 and Hwy 49).
- Access to high speed internet.
- Access to meeting facilities for Board meetings and other conservancy meetings.
- Convenient access for employees to schools, affordable housing, alternative transportation and other services.
- Opportunity for Conservancy to contribute to the economic well-being of the community.

Timeline

- December 9, 2005 DGS releases advertisement for office space
- January 9, 2006 Deadline for submitting property proposals
- January 12 – Site visits and evaluation of proposals occur
February 1, 2006

- February/March 2006 Conservancy Board selects office location at
Board meeting

If the Conservancy Board approves the process outlined above, the selection decision for the Sierra Nevada Conservancy headquarters will be scheduled on the agenda for the first meeting of 2006.

Final Report on the 2005 Subregional Outreach Sessions

Introduction

During the summer and early fall of 2005, community outreach sessions were held in each of the Sierra Nevada Conservancy's six subregions to introduce the Conservancy (SNC) and to initiate dialogue with local governments, stakeholders, and other interested parties. County supervisors representing the various subregions on the SNC Board, in coordination with Resources Agency staff, hosted workshops in Bishop, Susanville, Sonora, Fresno, El Dorado Hills, and Quincy. The Sierra Business Council, a Truckee-based nonprofit association of businesses, agencies, organizations, and individuals working to promote the social, environmental, and financial health of the Sierra, provided both staff and substantial related support in planning, publicizing, and coordinating the sessions. Staff from the California Tahoe Conservancy facilitated the sessions and assisted in recording participant comments during the listening sessions.

Invitations to attend outreach sessions were mailed to all local elected officials within the Sierra Nevada region. These included county supervisors, city council members, and elected officers of local entities such as fire, irrigation, and community service districts. State and Federal officials also received notification by mail. Public service announcements and area-wide notice posting ensured wider public outreach. E-mail and word of mouth also played important roles in spreading the information to nonprofits and tribal organizations, as well as to ranchers, farmers, business leaders and other persons likely to be interested.

The outreach sessions followed a consistent agenda: (1) introductory comments by policymakers on the significance of the sessions; (2) background descriptions of the SNC's legislation, purpose, and governance; (3) summary of the nine program areas in which the SNC has been directed to focus its efforts; and (4) listening sessions

at various separate stations, where participants shared their thoughts and ideas regarding the future role of the SNC. Support materials, including maps and SNC legislation, were available to all participants. All public comments made in the listening sessions were recorded for reporting to the SNC board; these comments have been posted on the SNC website.

From the start, the sessions were designed to initiate dialogue with stakeholders and interested parties. Facilitators explained to the participants that the initial outreach sessions would help to lay the groundwork for strategic planning and development of program guidelines, but that both processes would continue to rely on extensive public input and comment.

Findings and Observations

All six outreach sessions were well-attended, with 75 to 150 people at each. Participants included local government officials and staff, representatives of agriculture and business organizations, environmental groups, land trusts, and tribal organizations, as well as interested private citizens. Participation was cooperative and engaging, with most attendees expressing a high degree of interest in the SNC and its role in the greater Sierra region. As would be expected, the issues and concerns raised by participants reflected considerable diversity of outlook. There were, however, a number of recognizable themes woven throughout the six sessions.

First, there was near-unanimity in the desire to see the SNC, once in action, helping local governments, nonprofits and tribal organizations to implement existing (and future) plans and programs through local assistance grants. In areas of the region without existing plans and programs, there was an expressed interest in developing plans to provide a framework in which projects may move forward. This reflects a visible consensus in the region in favor of maintaining local governance and authority, coupled with an acknowledgement of the need for funding to complete projects. There was widespread understanding of the need to build capacity in local governments and nonprofits, increasing their ability to carry out grant-funded projects. This includes the provision of technical expertise to local players in

the identification and scoping of projects, as well as assistance in the grant application process, and in the completion of environmental review documents. In addition, participants expressed a strong interest in sharing local knowledge and expertise in order to build capacity within the Conservancy itself.

Second, there was widespread support for programs that would address sustainable forestry practices. Again, participants expressed a desire to see such programs implemented through existing fire districts to ensure local involvement and supervision. On a more regional level, participants noted the opportunity for cogeneration facilities utilizing the biomass produced in fuels reduction activities.

Many participants suggested that the SNC is in a unique position to address regional needs by bridging jurisdictional boundaries. This regional approach was referenced in a number of contexts, including watershed-based planning, multi-jurisdiction visitor centers, regional trails projects, and scientific research. Many individuals cited the need to compile existing research and plans quickly so that the SNC may better identify gaps in knowledge and focus its efforts where they will be most useful rather than duplicating prior work. Some noted the Sierra Nevada Ecosystem Project (SNEP) and the Fire and Resource Assessment Program (FRAP), hoping that these comprehensive efforts would be built upon rather than repeated or duplicated. The need for a regional Geographic Information Systems (GIS) database was repeatedly mentioned.

Community development strategies figured prominently in many discussions, with a particular focus on building economically sustainable communities. Recommendations were quite diverse, but centered around integrating natural resources, agriculture, tourism, and recreation to establish a place-based heritage economy.

While some participants were at first confused about the mission and directives of the SNC, others – especially those from local land trusts and organizations such as historic preservation groups, arts councils, and community development programs -- displayed good familiarity with the SNC's unique legislation. Many of these representatives had participated in the process which led to the formation of the SNC. They came prepared to recommend programs, projects, and specific

actions. They expressed an interest in future, ongoing involvement with the SNC, and how their ideas might be incorporated in the planning process.

Last, place-based values, and the desire to retain local character, were consistently identified as key issues. Accommodation of regional needs will require sensitivity as strategic planning goes ahead, and as program guidelines are developed. Program guidelines, in particular, will need to provide flexibility in order to respond to changing regional and subregional contexts.

Overall, the outreach sessions reflected a strong willingness by residents and local governments to work with the SNC to help preserve and enhance the environment, economy, and quality of life throughout the Sierra. Despite, or perhaps because of, the well-known differences in outlook, all participants attended with the intent of expressing their concerns, and sharing thoughts. These participatory sessions established a strong foundation for the SNC to build upon as it moves ahead.

A complete transcript of public comment is available on the Sierra Nevada Conservancy website at:
www.sierranevadaconservancy.ca.gov

Recommendations

From the facilitators' standpoint, the experience of the outreach sessions suggests the following recommendations for the future:

1. Continue, strengthen, and expand current dialogue with local governments, nonprofits, tribal organizations, and interested individuals within the near term. Failure to act in a timely manner increases the likelihood that parties who are currently interest and engaged parties might become alienated.
2. Implement on-the-ground, accessible workshops during the SNC's strategic planning process. These workshops should make use of the physical presence of SNC staff within Sierra communities, at least for temporary stints.

3. Deploy SNC staff – and, ultimately, offices -- at strategic locations around the Sierra Region to ensure accessibility to partners and constituencies.
4. Develop program guidelines that are respectful of, and provide the flexibility to accommodate, local needs.
5. Emphasize implementation of locally-adopted plans and programs which are consistent with the SNC's mission.
6. Utilize innovative and technologically advanced communication systems between the SNC and partner organizations to overcome the difficulties which are inherent in such a broad service area.
7. Ensure consistency and accuracy in the dissemination of public information about the SNC. The SNC website should be the one central source for such information. Information needs to be updated regularly, using a well thought-out and systematic approach.

-- Ray Lacey