

Background

On April 6th, 47 individuals from 23 three diverse organizations took part in the 8th annual Sierra Day in the Capitol – a day dedicated to raising awareness among State Legislators and their staff about the importance of the Sierra Nevada and the benefits the Region provides to the entire State of California. This year SNC staff worked closely with the Mountain Counties Water Resources Association and other organizations to form the theme and supporting materials for the event. Sponsorship of Sierra Day in the Capitol increased from 19 organizations to 25 this year and included the following organizations:

- Bear-Yuba Partnership
- California Cattlemen's Association
- California Council of Land Trusts
- California Forestry Association
- California Land Management
- California Rangeland Trust
- California Ski Industry Association
- California Trout
- Mountain Counties Water Resources Association
- Nevada County Land Trust
- Northern Sierra Partnership
- Pacific Forest Trust
- O.A.R.S.
- Pacific Forest Trust
- Placer Land Trust
- Planning and Conservation League
- Regional Council of Rural Counties
- Sierra Business Council
- Sierra-Cascade Land Trust Council
- Sierra Foothill Conservancy
- Sierra Nevada Alliance
- Sierra Water Workgroup
- Southern Sierra Partnership
- The Sierra Fund
- The Trust for Public Land

In addition to sponsoring, Mountain Counties Water Resources Association joined three other Sierra Day donors, Cardno Extrix, Kennedy/Jenks Consulting, and Mr. and Mrs. Robert Behee from Tuolumne County, who contributed to the development of informational media for the day and lunch for the participants.

Sierra Day participants, including SNC Boardmembers John Brissenden and Bob Kirkwood, convened at the Stanford Mansion and began the day with an overview by Jim Branham, SNC Executive Officer, and other informational presentations. The group was looking forward to two scheduled speakers, California Natural Resources Secretary John Laird and State Senator Tom Berryhill; but unfortunately each was called away at the last minute for emergency meetings, so neither was able to attend. Another event partner, The Trust for Public Land, provided participants with a primer on how to communicate effectively with Legislators and their staff.

In the afternoon, 14 teams of enthusiastic Sierra Nevada supporters descended on legislative offices in the Capitol and delivered their message – centered on the theme: “Looking to the Source: Watersheds of the Sierra Nevada” – to more than 65 legislators

and staff using maps, fact sheets, and other information. Group members talked about the journey of Sierra Nevada water, area of origin and beneficial use issues, and the benefits to the State of investing in the Sierra Nevada Region.

To further emphasize the theme, Sierra Day sponsors mounted a display on the wall outside the Governor's Office showing the journey of water from the Sierra Nevada to other parts of the state. The display included large-format photographs illustrating the beneficial uses of Sierra water both within and outside the Region, a relief map of California showing the Region and its watersheds, and panels showing three key municipal water districts (Los Angeles, San Francisco, and East Bay Municipal Utilities District) and maps of where in the Sierra their water originates, which are included as [Exhibit A](#) to this staff report.

Current Status

Sierra Day in the Capitol received mostly positive reviews from participants. There was a little disappointment, understandably, in the last-minute loss of the morning session speakers. All were looking forward to an address from Secretary Laird and Senator Berryhill. However, people seemed pleased with the experiences they had meeting with legislators and staff, who were impressed that such a diverse group of interests had come together to deliver a unified message about the importance of the Sierra Nevada. News of the day's activities was carried on local radio, interviews on three local radio stations and in the *Capitol Alert*.

Next Steps

We hope to get more groups and individuals to participate in next year's Sierra Day in the Capitol and to further build on the message that investment in the Sierra Nevada is needed to protect and enhance benefits that the Region provides to California.

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 on how to make next year's event an even greater success.