

**STATE OF CALIFORNIA
SIERRA NEVADA CONSERVANCY**

**Sierra Nevada Conservancy Grant Program
Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control,
River and Coastal Protection Act of 2006 (Proposition 84)**

Applicant: AMERICAN RIVERS

Project Title: ACKERSON MEADOWS: KEYSTONE HABITAT FOR GREAT GRAY OWLS

Subregion: SOUTH CENTRAL

County: TUOLUMNE

SNC Funding: \$65,000.00

Total Project Cost: \$65,000.00

Application Number: 427

Final Score: 100

PROJECT SCOPE

American Rivers will conduct pre-project due diligence work relative to an acquisition in fee title of Ackerson Meadows, a 415 acre privately owned meadow in Tuolumne County surrounded by public lands. This property has the highest density of Great-Gray Owl in the Sierra Nevada, in addition to numerous hydrologic, historical, and cultural resource values.

Ackerson Meadows has been a focal point of conservation efforts in Tuolumne County, with a collaborative dialog established around the project promoting the importance of this acquisition. The property, once acquired, will be granted to the National Park Service, which will provide both resource protection and public access. Yosemite National Park will take ownership and develop interpretive and recreational opportunities associated with the property in keeping with park service values and resource protection policies.

The property itself has potential for the development of a large-scale resort development, given its proximity to the Park's Big Oak Flat entrance. By acquiring the property, and subsequently granting it to the park service, American Rivers will preserve this open space and ensure its management for the enhancement and protection of its numerous values.

This project is consistent with Proposition 84 and meets SNC's goal of protecting land with high natural resource values, water and critical wildlife habitat.

Once these are complete, the grantee will move forward on the acquisition.

PROJECT SCHEDULE

DETAILED PROJECT DELIVERABLES	TIMELINE
Finalize Workplan and Budget	June 2011
Finalize agreements with subcontractors and partners	July 2011
Execute contract with appraiser	July 2011
Finalize assessment protocol and management plan	July 2011
Executive contract for due-diligence work	October 2011
Finalize appraisal	November 2011
Submit 6-month progress report to SNC	December 2011
Finalize due-diligence report	March 2012
Finalize meadow assessment technical memo	April 2012
Submit Final Report to SNC	May 2012
FINAL PAYMENT/FINAL PAYMENT REQUEST	June 30, 2012

PROJECT COSTS

PROJECT BUDGET CATEGORIES	TOTAL SNC FUNDING
Staff/Personnel Expense	\$15,974.35
Travel/Meeting Expense	2,000.00
Sub-grants/Contracts/Consultants	24,600.00
Materials/Supplies	110.00
Equipment Leases/Purchases	1,036.33
Fees – Appraisal/Permits/CEQA/Easement	17,000.00
Performance Measure Reporting	2,237.00
Administrative Costs	2,042.32
GRAND TOTAL	\$65,000.00

PROJECT SUPPORT LETTERS

- Audubon California
- The Institute for Bird Populations
- The Pacific Forest Trust
- Central Sierra Environmental Resource Center

PROJECT PERFORMANCE MEASURES

There are four Performance Measures common to all grants. In addition, grantees are required to include between one and three project-specific measures. Performance Measures listed here represent those proposed by applicants and may be modified through further discussion with SNC staff.

- Acre Feet per Annum of Stream Flow Improved
- Acre Feet per Annum of Water Supply Conserved or Enhanced
- Acres of Land Improved or Restored
- Feet of Trail/Path Constructed or Improved
- Linear Feet of Stream Bank Protected or Restored
- Number of Significant Sites Protected or Preserved
- Tons of Carbon Sequestered

6. Project Summary

County: Tuolumne County**Applicant:** American Rivers**Project Title:** Ackerson Meadow: Keystone Habitat for Great Gray Owls**PROJECT GOAL**

The overall goal of this project entitled: *Ackerson Meadow: Keystone Habitat for Great Gray Owls* is to remove the threat of development from Ackerson Meadow through acquisition, protection, and restoration of this keystone habitat, and through this initial action, jump start a movement to protect all remaining vital habitat for Great Gray Owls in the Sierra. This project is supported by a growing partnership of organizations including: American Rivers, The Pacific Forest Trust, The Institute for Bird Populations, Yosemite National Park, Central Sierra Environmental Resource Center, Sierra Foothill Conservancy, Tuolumne County Land Trust, Audubon Society, and Sierra Forest Legacy. More specifically, implementation of the full project will contribute to Proposition 84 goals by increasing: 1) riparian and aquatic habitat for a range of special status species; 2) water storage and flood attenuation capacity; and 3) water quality.

PROJECT SCOPE

The Ackerson Meadow Project is designed to proceed in five successive steps including: 1) appraisal of property, due diligence, and environmental assessment; 2) acquisition of Ackerson Meadow; 3) transfer of title to National Park Service; 4) in depth assessment and development of meadow restoration plan; and 5) implementation of meadow restoration plan and performance monitoring. With this proposal, we request funding from SNC for activity 1: appraisal of property, due diligence, and environmental assessment.

The conservation outcomes that will result from full implementation of this project are many and will be monitored closely throughout the project. These include:

- Restore and protect watershed services provided by Ackerson Meadow including attenuating flood flows, summer base flows, and water quality
- Restore and protect wildlife services provided by Ackerson Meadow including habitat for birds and bats, and most particularly, Great Gray Owls
- Jump start a movement to protect and restore the remaining critical meadow habitat for the Great Gray Owls in California and to manage this landscape as an ecological whole

This project is requesting \$65,500 from SNC to implement this first activity. The project team is fully capable of all aspects of project management to ensure successful implementation. American Rivers will provide overall project management and coordination, and technical expertise in the assessment process. The Institute for Bird Populations will also assist with the assessment work, while the Pacific Forest Trust will oversee the appraisal and due diligence process.

LETTERS OF SUPPORT

Rodney Siegel, Institute for Bird Populations

Megan Wargo, Pacific Forest Trust

Graham Chisholm, Audubon California

John Buckley, Central Sierra Environmental Resource Center

SNC PROJECT DELIVERABLES AND SCHEDULE

DETAILED PROJECT DELIVERABLES	TIMELINE
Finalized Workplan and Budget (Task 1)	June 30, 2011
Signed Subcontracts/grants with Project Partners (Task 1)	July 30, 2011
Biannual Financial and Performance Reports (Task 1)	December 15, 2011
Final Report (Task 1)	May 31, 2012
Contract with Appraiser (Task 2)	July 30, 2011
Finalized Appraisal (Task 2)	November 30, 2011
Contract for Due Diligence Work (Task 3)	October 31, 2011
Finalized Due Diligence Report	March 30, 2012
Final Assessment Protocol and MP (Task 4)	July 30, 2011
Final Meadow Assessment Technical Memo (Task 4)	April 15, 2012

SNC PROJECT COSTS

PROJECT BUDGET CATEGORIES	TOTAL SNC FUNDING
Staff/Personnel Expense – Project Related Wages/Benefits/Occupancy	\$ 15,974.35
Travel/Meeting Expense - Project Related	\$ 2,000.00
Subgrants/Contracts/Consultants - Project Related	\$ 24,600.00
Materials/Supplies - Project Related	\$ 110.00
Equipment Leases/Purchases - Project Dependent	\$ 1,036.33
Fees - Appraisal/Permits/CEQA/Easement	\$ 17,000.00
Performance Measure reporting	\$ 2,487.00
Administrative Costs	\$ 2,292.32
SNC GRANT TOTAL	\$ 65,500.00