

RESOLUTION NO. 12- 7824

Before the Board of Supervisors
County of Plumas, State of California

**RESOLUTION APPROVING APPLICATIONS FOR GRANT FUNDS FOR PROPOSITION 84
PRESERVATION OF RANCHES AND AGRICULTURAL LANDS GRANT PROGRAM UNDER
THE SAFE WATER, WATER QUALITY AND SUPPLY, FLOOD CONTROL, RIVER AND
COASTAL PROTECTION BOND ACT OF 2006.**

WHEREAS, the Legislature and Governor of the State of California have provided Funds for the program shown above; and

WHEREAS, the Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) has been delegated the responsibility for the administration of a portion of these funds through a local assistance grants program, establishing necessary procedures; and

WHEREAS, said procedures established by the Sierra Nevada Conservancy require a resolution certifying the approval of application by the Sierra Valley Resource Conservation District (Sierra Valley RCD) governing board before submission of said application to the SNC; and

WHEREAS, the Sierra Valley RCD, if selected, will enter into an agreement with the SNC to carry out the project; and

WHEREAS, the County has identified the Sierra Valley Agricultural Water Quality and Habitat Enhancement Project by the Sierra Valley RCD as valuable toward meeting its mission and goals,

WHEREAS, the County recognizes the collaboration between the Sierra Valley RCD, Feather River RCD and Plumas-Sierra Department of Agriculture to coordinate weed control and management within Plumas County.

BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED by the Board of Supervisors of the County of Plumas, State of California, that this Board:

Approves the submittal of an application by the Sierra Valley RCD for the Sierra Valley Agricultural Water Quality and Habitat Enhancement Project for the SNC Proposition 84 Preservation of Ranches and Agricultural Lands Grant Program.

The foregoing resolution was duly passed by the Board of Supervisors of the County of Plumas at a regular meeting held October 16, 2012, by the following roll call vote:

Ayes: SUPERVISORS SWOFFORD, THRALL, SIMPSON, KENNEDY, MEACHER

Noes: NONE

Absent: NONE



Chair, Board of Supervisor

ATTEST:



Clerk of the said Board

Sierra Valley Agricultural Water Quality and Habitat Enhancement Project

Project Summary. The Sierra Valley Resource Conservation District (SVRCD) proposes six water quality and habitat enhancement activities within the Sierra Valley that will enhance water, soil and wildlife habitat corridor quality, increase watershed awareness for the public, demonstrate project effectiveness for the ranching and community stakeholders, and support the local ranching economy with improved water quality and forage, and with project installation work. Together, these projects will increase the connectivity of existing water quality and wildlife habitat improvement projects and leverage earlier investments completed on private lands in Sierra Valley.

Sierra Valley and its tributaries are at the headwaters of the Middle Fork of the Feather River watershed in the northern Sierra Nevada that provides agricultural and municipal water to over 20 million Californians. Various watershed coalitions and organizations, governmental agencies, land trusts and private landowners have been implementing water quality and wildlife habitat projects on Sierra Valley ranches for many years. There is currently a patchwork of ranches in Sierra Valley that are implementing water quality improvement and wildlife habitat enhancement projects.

Goals. The water quality and habitat corridor enhancement goals for the Sierra Valley Agricultural Water Quality and Habitat Enhancement Project (Project) are: improve water quality; reduce potential sources of erosion; improve water use efficiency; restore healthy vegetation biodiversity through noxious weed containment and control; enhance riparian and habitat areas along waterways and natural springs within the various project sites; and provide various educational components that reflect project outcomes and improve conservation understanding. This will be accomplished by installing 3 miles of riparian fencing to manage 28 acres of riparian areas; installing an off-stream livestock water system; installing 3/4 mile of pipe into an existing dirt waterway; 1300 – 2000 acres of invasive weed control with targeted re-seeding to establish healthy vegetation; project demonstration tour; publication of weed management material; and conservation project signage. The proposed project is comprised of six separate project components on private properties.

Budget. This project will be funded by the Sierra Nevada Conservancy's *Preservation of Ranches and Agricultural Lands Grant Program*. Project support will be augmented by numerous Sierra Valley watershed and agricultural stakeholders, including but not limited to Natural Resources Conservation Service technical service, Plumas and Sierra Counties' RAC cost-share funding, and numerous ranching families. Sierra Valley Resource Conservation District directors will personally be involved in project

Sierra Valley Resource Conservation District
SNC Proposition 84 Bond Act of 2006
Preserving Ranches and Agricultural Lands Grant Program Application
Project Narrative Description

implementation and management. The costs to implement the conservation practices and oversee the SNC contract will not exceed \$350,000.

Outcomes. To be completed by early 2014, the outcomes of this project will benefit the natural community, the public and the local economy. There will be reduced active erosion, improved water quality, increased riparian and habitat benefits, healthier biodiversity on native and non-native vegetation on agricultural lands. Further, local ranchers and stakeholders, including public officials will learn from this project during a tail-gate tour and various other presentations, in the hope it will encourage other conservation projects. Nature-tourists will benefit from an enhanced environmental setting and experience. To support the local economy, landowners and local contractors will be paid 100% of project costs to install these projects; and local vendors will be used where practicable to supply project materials and outreach supplies.

These projects were self-selected by the landowners themselves and the SVRCD. They will be installed with assistance by the project landowners, other community partners and, subsequently managed by the landowners. All practices installed will meet local USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) standards and specifications. Grazing management plans will be promoted to sustain effective stewardship for the life of the projects, most for 50 years. Many community stakeholders will make significant in-kind contributions, including the Plumas and Sierra Counties Resource Advisory Committees Secure Rural Schools Title II Funding and the Natural Resources Conservation Service.

Permitting. The Project meets the requirements for Categorical Exemption for CEQA and a Notice of Exemption will be filed with the County Clerk. Permits required will be landowner pesticide use permits issued by the Agricultural Commissioner for herbicide treatment of noxious weeds and possibly one well permit for the off-stream stockwater facility.

Summary. The Sierra Valley Agricultural Water Quality and Habitat Enhancement Project will be a strategic public investment to leverage and link prior and existing public and private investments in Sierra Valley to enhance its natural resources for all and to support the local agricultural economy in Plumas and Sierra Counties.