



THE SIERRA FUND

2009
ORGANIZATIONAL
REPORT



From the Desk of Elizabeth J. Martin, CEO

As money got tighter in 2009, The Sierra Fund got more creative in our own approach to philanthropy. Advised by our Board and Sierra conservation leaders, The Sierra Fund made philanthropic dollars work hard to leverage public funding for vital projects. We raised money from private contributors to provide cash flow loans to key Sierra Nevada conservation organizations during the state grant "freeze". We fostered a new health services program as well as projects to acquire significant lands along the Yuba River. And, our Donor Advised Funds invested in young leaders, wild rivers and a variety of other important causes.

At the same time, sustaining funding from The California Wellness Foundation, The California Endowment, the Richard and Rhoda Goldman Fund, True North Foundation and the Rose Foundation for Communities and the Environment enabled us to pursue our strategic campaign, the Mining's Toxic Legacy Initiative. We talked to thousands of rural people about how to protect themselves from the potential health and environmental impacts of mining toxins, and helped our California Congressional delegation learn more about and invest in remediating abandoned mines on federal lands. Our cutting-edge work to highlight mining's toxic legacy is attracting millions of state, federal and philanthropic dollars to this crucial Sierra Nevada environmental justice issue.

Our success is directly attributable to the donors who support our programs.

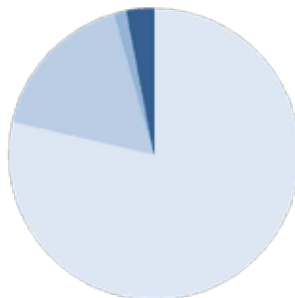
On behalf of the Sierra Nevada, our gratitude and thanks to the individuals and organizations who make our efforts possible.

For the Sierra,

FINANCIAL REVIEW 2009

Income \$510,038

- Contributions: Grants 82%
- Contributions: Major Donors/Misc 12%
- Investment Income realized 13%
- Investment income unrealized gain/loss (7%)



Expenses \$561,399

- Program Expenses 69%
- Management & General 5%
- Fundraising 5%
- Grants 21%



- Operating & Program - Unrestricted 3%
- Operating & Program - Reserve 14%
- Funds & Managed Accounts 76%
- Accounts Receivable 7%

Assets Under Management
\$583,965

NOTEWORTHY PRAISE

At our annual reception—now a December tradition—The Sierra Fund Board of Directors honored Senator Patricia Wiggins, Senator Lois Wolk, and Assemblymember Jared Huffman for their dedicated work to reform suction dredge mining regulations over the past several years. Pine cone awards were also presented in special recognition of other individuals in this effort.



SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR DONORS

\$100,000+

University of California
The California Endowment

\$50,000-\$99,999

Patty and John Brissenden

\$10,000-\$49,999

Alan and Cledith Jennings
Rose Foundation
Sierra Nevada Alliance

\$5,000-\$9,999

Resources Legacy Fund
The Nature Conservancy
Trust for Public Land

\$1,000-\$4,999

John W. Hellwig and Mary Peterson
Stephanie Mooers
Doug Phelps
Sierra Cascade Land Trust Council
Fred and Shirley Switzer

\$250-\$999

Parker Blackman
California Trout
Eastern Sierra Land Trust
Eric Fredricksen
Julia and Christopher Grimsrud
Brian M. Hart and Sara A. Callaghan
Phil Isenberg
Robert C. Kirkwood
Mono Lake Committee
Gregory Meagher
Thomas Mooers
Jeff and Kristil Robarts
Karen and Robin Saunders
Robert Shibatani
Susan and Thomas Smegal

\$10-\$249

Eric Antebi and Marla Kolman-Antebi
Ron and Vava Bailey
Robert and Carol Berman
Charles and Mary Brock
Marc R. Burgraff and Simone Malboeuf
Carol Casaday
Therese and Cory Casper
Jef Chadwick
Janet Cohen and Chris Scammon
L. and Sharon Crandall
John D'Avolio
Olivia Diaz and Dr. Ernest Malamud
Sheila Dixon
Maureen Drouin and Mathew Scease
Empire Events
Suzanne Evans
Thomas J. Evers and Erin P. Sugrue
Rebecca and Sharon Flynn
Pat Footer
Barbara Forslund and Phil Klingner
Robert and Kathleen Forslund
Roger Goldman
Marella Guigou
Carl and Ellen Hall
Dr. John and Tamra Hege
Anne and Lawrence Heilman
John Hensley and Sandra Brown
Roger Hicks and Linda J. Rachmel
Ralph and Dorothy Hitchcock
William and Karen Hoefs
Mary and Michael Hogan
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Robert E. Johnson
Julie W. Jurs and Raymond R. Garcia
Cynthia Kang
Daniel Kelliher

Patrick Kenneally
William and Marilyn Marken
Joshua and Hedy Marks
Amy and Jason Markus
Wiley R. Martin and Joyce McKay
Maureen Meikle
Jennifer Melville and Alexander Abbott
Barbara and Gerald Meral
Janet Mooers
Jim Mooers
Victoria E. Moore and Raymond S. Chan
Matthew O'Grady & Steve Vanlandingham
Michael Paparian
Donald and Mary Ann Parachini
Gary A. Patton
Sarah Pender
Pipe Makers Union, LLC
Chauncey and Teresa Poston
Rita Purpora
John and Yvonne Ramsden
Jane Rice
David Roque and Greg Donovan
Leslie Samuelrich and Richard J. Hannigan
Philip and Barbara Sarkisian
Gloria and James Servais
Richard S. Taylor and Tracy Grubbs
Bob and Konnie Warburton
Dr. John C. Weaver Jr.
Paul and Janelle Wegner
Wendy Wendlandt
Pamela and David Wiggert
Pauline and Mark Wilder
Cameron and Frances Wolfe
Gary and Janice Zimmerman

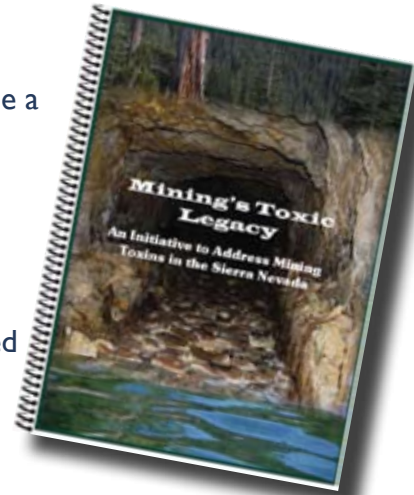
STRATEGIC CAMPAIGNS

Bringing attention and resources to the special needs of the Sierra

Mining's Toxic Legacy Initiative

From its beginning in 2006 when The Sierra Fund was the only organization working to address legacy mining pollution in the Sierra, our Mining's Toxic Legacy Initiative has come a long way in building a multi-faceted regional movement to address this issue.

In **2009** we achieved our outreach goal of making presentations to the public and local officials in all 22 counties of the Sierra, reaching 4,500 people who live, work or play in the Sierra. State and federal agencies are also joining us to address this issue—this year, two California agencies and US EPA Region 9 created departments to address abandoned mines. First-ever congressional hearings were held, and our CEO Elizabeth Martin was invited to speak on abandoned mines in California at the national EPA Brownfields Conference in New Orleans.



To support the growth of this movement, we have focused on two strategic needs:

A Mining Toxins Working Group: To increase collaboration and support critical research, funding, and policy needs, we have drafted a blueprint for a regional working group on legacy toxins. This forum will allow our coalition partners a strategic, overall view of the many-faceted issue, while separate committees to address the Outreach, Policy, Human Health, and Science and Technology aspects of this issue will support cutting edge practices in each field.

Health Exposure Studies: To learn whether Sierra residents are being exposed to legacy mining toxins where they live, work or play, we conducted pilot studies on local fish consumption and mining toxins on recreational trails. The results of these studies (to be released in 2010) indicate that some people are being exposed to dangerous levels of mercury, arsenic, asbestos or lead, and further research is warranted. This information gives us important tools for future outreach to community members and leaders in the Sierra.

After four years, this movement is just beginning. We are looking forward to many more years of collaboration with a diverse array of partners to bring funding and other resources to the Sierra's longest neglected environmental problem.



"We are thankful for The Sierra Fund's work with California tribal people, including our Tribe, to reform suction dredge mining regulations and to defend the native fish, water and peoples of California."

*Leaf Hillman,
Director of Natural Resources,
Karuk Tribe.*

WELCOME! In 2009, The Sierra Fund was proud to welcome John Laird to our Board of Directors. A retired CA Assemblyman, John has a long history of action to benefit the Sierra as former Chair of the Assembly Budget Committee, and one of the authors of the legislation creating the Sierra Nevada Conservancy.



ADVOCACY

A voice for new State and Federal investment in the Sierra

The Sierra Fund is a regular presence in the State Capitol, working with Senate and Assembly committees that oversee natural resource management.

Sierra Day in the Capitol

Sierra Day 2009 presented a refreshing message to remember the Sierra amid the current turmoil in Sacramento. More than 30 Sierra representatives brightened the day in the State Capitol, bringing our Range of Light into each legislator's office. For years, The Sierra Fund and Sierra Nevada Alliance have teamed up to bring citizen advocates into the Capitol—this year the Sierra Nevada Conservancy co-sponsored, providing a fresh twist and a fabulous display in the lobby outside the Governor's office.

Suction Dredge Regulations

As part of our work to reduce the impacts of legacy mercury on the communities and environment of the Sierra, we joined a hard working coalition to successfully pass SB 670 (Wiggins). Passed with bi-partisan support, this bill places a moratorium on recreational suction dredge mining until an adequate environmental impact review can be completed.

"The Sierra Fund plays an important role in the California State Capitol bringing attention to Sierra Nevada environmental justice issues, especially mining's toxic legacy."

*Assemblymember Jared Huffman,
Chair, Assembly Water, Parks
& Wildlife Committee*

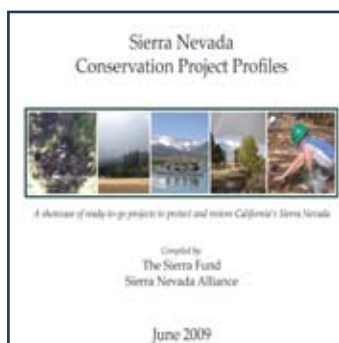


Congressional Field Hearings on Abandoned Mines and Mercury in CA

TSF CEO Elizabeth Martin was invited to testify at these first-ever field hearings to examine legacy mercury from abandoned mines in California. She highlighted the need for federal support to increase collaboration, fund strategic research and federal programs, and increase education on public health.

Stimulus Money for Mine Cleanup

The Sierra Fund worked closely with Senator Feinstein to help underscore the need for new investment in cleaning up abandoned mines on federal lands, where the majority of abandoned mines in the state are located. US Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management were each awarded millions through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act for legacy mine assessment and remediation projects in California.



PHILANTHROPIC SERVICES

Assisting private donors to implement their vision and save the Sierra

As a community foundation with a unique strategic vision for the region, The Sierra Fund's role is to support and build the capacity of other Sierra organizations. In response to the economic and financial challenges of 2009, we pursued some exciting, creative ways to keep great projects on track in the Sierra.

Cash Flow and Bridge Loans

When in December 2008 the State of California announced an indefinite freeze of all bond-funded projects, many Sierra organizations were faced with closing their doors. The Sierra Fund was able to take quick action, collecting funds to keep key organizations on track. For example, with loans from our Brissenden, Funk and Sarah Forslund Donor-Advised Funds, we provided short-term loans to the Sierra Nevada Alliance. These loans helped cover cash flow for nine months until they received reimbursement from the State on already approved grants.

"Loans from TSF Donor Funds were critical to keeping the Sierra Nevada Alliance operating smoothly in 2009. We are deeply grateful for the support TSF provides to so many great conservation groups throughout the entire region."

*Joan Clayburgh, Executive Director
Sierra Nevada Alliance*



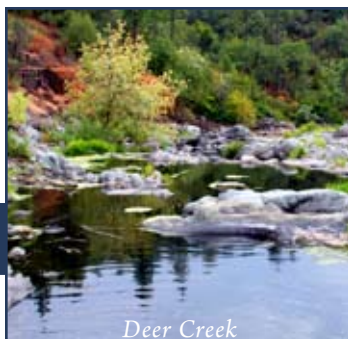
Fiscal Sponsorship

In 2009, The Sierra Fund stepped in to be the new fiscal sponsor of the **Breast Cancer Research Project**. This excellent three-year old program provides teleconferenced support groups to breast cancer survivors in remote counties of northeastern California.

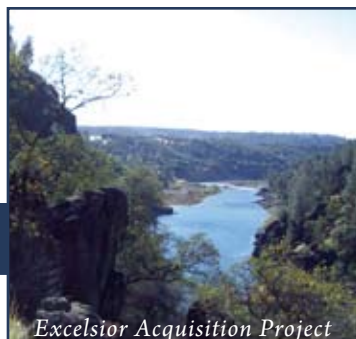
We continue to sponsor two key local projects: a partnership between the Tsi-Akim Maidu Tribe and Friends of Deer Creek to infuse local watershed restoration work with cultural and historic sensitivity; and assessment and acquisition of high-priority property in the Yuba River Wildlife Area.

Strategic Grantmaking

In addition to grants from our eight donor-advised funds, we initiated a "micro grants" program to attract new organizational partners to our Mining Initiative, while providing them funds to host an event in their community. Other grants went for sponsorship of important regional conferences and events.



Deer Creek



Excelsior Acquisition Project



Yuba River Wildlife Area

GRANTS & LOANS MADE IN 2009

This year, The Sierra Fund supported key Sierra organizations and projects by giving more than \$115,000 in grants to outstanding organizations and providing nearly \$121,500 in bridge loans, litigation loans and fiscal sponsorship (as well as maintaining outstanding loan balances of \$147,958).

ISIS Fund Grants: \$60,285

Funds for this account are raised from various individual or philanthropic sources, and given out as grants to organizations in the Sierra, as part of our overall philanthropic mission.

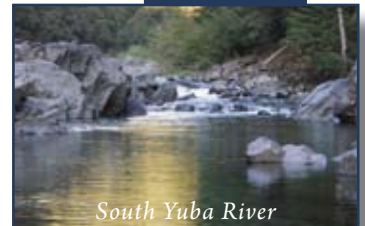
Friends of Deer Creek	\$22,500
Northern California Grantmakers	\$500
Planning and Conservation League	\$340
Save Round Valley Alliance	\$20,000
Sierra Business Council	\$200
Sierra Nevada Alliance	\$2,600
Sierra Club, Mother Lode Chapter	\$5,000
Sierra Institute for Community and Environment	\$7,545
South Yuba River Citizens League (SYRCL)	\$600
Tsi-Akim Maidu Tribe	\$1,000



Donor-Advised Grants (ISIS related): \$42,000

Grants from these funds are directed by individual donors toward activities in the Sierra. At this time The Sierra Fund has eight donor advised funds, and four managed funds.

Save the Air in Nevada County (STainNC)	\$2,000
Save Round Valley Alliance	\$15,000
South Yuba River Citizens League (SYRCL)	\$25,000



Donor-Advised Grants (general interest): \$13,000

Donor-advised grants that reflect donor interests in activities outside of the Sierra geographic region.

Alaska Conservation Alliance	\$2,000
Green Corps	\$6,000
University of California Botanical Garden	\$5,000



Program-Related Investments: \$269,458

These funds are loaned to organizations for various purposes, including providing cash flow loans to organizations with reimbursable government grants, or as recoverable loans to organizations that are engaged in impact litigation. Litigation loans are repaid if the suit is successful and legal fees are collected, and are forgiven as grants if the case is not successful.

Bridge Loans:

Sierra Nevada Alliance	\$100,000
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Litigation Loans:

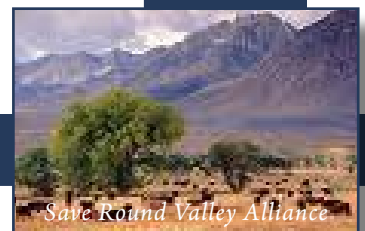
High Sierra Rural Alliance	\$15,000
Outstanding Balances	\$50,000

Fiscal Sponsorship:

Deer Creek Project	\$6,415
Outstanding Balances	\$47,851

Line of Credit:

Outstanding Balances	\$50,193
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*We dedicate this report in fond memory of Bob Lichter,
who generously donated many of his beautiful photos and much of
his time and love to support the Sierra Nevada*



As an innovative community foundation for the environment, The Sierra Fund partners with private donors and public agencies to increase and organize investment in the communities and natural resources of the Sierra Nevada.



We work toward our mission using three basic methods:

Strategic Campaigns designed to bring attention and resources to the special needs of the Sierra Nevada.

Advocacy at the State and Federal level for public investment in the Sierra Nevada.

Philanthropic Services for our donors and partners to design and implement initiatives that reflect their vision and objectives.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Patty Brissenden, *Board Chair*
John Regan, *Secretary*
Alison Harvey, *Treasurer*
Esther Feldman
Gerald Meral, Ph.D.
John Laird

STAFF

Elizabeth "Izzy" Martin: *Chief Executive Officer*
Kerry Morse: *Director of Communications*
Emily Rivenes: *Finance and Operations Manager*
Mike Thornton: *Mining Project Community Organizer*
Susan Ferrier: *Breast Cancer Research Project Manager*

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