



Organizing

Advocating

Investing

Building

Reclaiming

The Sierra Fund Organizational Report 2012-2016

Five years for the Sierra
February 2017



Greetings from

The Sierra Fund

Dear Friends,

The last five years have seen an explosion in the impact of The Sierra Fund. By any measure, our programs have grown into making a significant and visible contribution to protecting and restoring the natural resources and communities of the Sierra Nevada. We have:

- served as a fiscal funnel bringing millions of dollars into the region for coordinated activities to restore resiliency to the headwaters of the state;
- demonstrated new approaches to solving century old physical and chemical hazards at hydraulic mining and hard-rock mining sites; and
- led significant improvements in public policies aimed at strengthening public notification about fish consumption safety issues, improving enforcement of mining law, requiring more rigorous due diligence in property acquisitions, and targeting new public resources to our region.

Our leadership work has been recognized by our partners. In winter 2016 the James Irvine Foundation awarded their prestigious leadership award to me in my role as leader of The Sierra Fund, bringing significant new resources to our work. I was nominated for this honor by the California Secretary for Natural Resources John Laird. Also in 2016 The South Yuba River Citizen's League recognized The Sierra Fund organization as their "Partner of the Year."

The challenges in front of us are just as explosive as our impact has been. The Sierra Nevada's forests, meadows, rivers and fish have been terribly stressed by years of drought and currently threaten the health and safety of the communities around and in the forest as well as the air and water quality of the entire state. Ironically, the torrential rainstorms of this year have added a new concern about the ability of our water infrastructure to handle the predicted changes in precipitation - extended drought periods punctuated by heavy rainstorms instead of snow. And, the legacy gold mines don't reclaim themselves.

We are proud to present this report "Five Years for the Sierra" outlining the highlights of our last five years of work and thanking the donors that have made this work possible. We really could not do this important work without their support.

For the Sierra,

Izzy



THE SIERRA FUND

Mission & Strategy

Since 2001 The Sierra Fund (TSF) has worked to increase and organize public and private investment to protect and restore the natural resources and communities of the Sierra Nevada region. We support organizations and communities by increasing public and private funding in the region, advocating for policy changes, and securing new intellectual resources that build capacity to promote the resiliency of California's headwaters. Our mission is pursued through:

Strategic Campaigns to build public awareness of the threats to the natural resources and communities of the Sierra Nevada.

Advocacy and organizing around the goal of increasing public investment in the region's natural resources and communities and bringing rural needs to public attention.

Philanthropic Services to direct and coordinate investment and development in the region.

Reclaiming the Sierra

For the last ten years The Sierra Fund's primary campaign, *Reclaiming the Sierra*, has sought to assess and address the ongoing environmental, cultural and human health impacts of historic mining in California. Our program is executed through original research, an informative bi-annual conference, public outreach, and regular meetings with a Working Group of technical advisors made up of over 60 representatives from local, state and federal regulatory agencies, research scientists, Native Californian tribes, watershed groups, conservation organizations, local elected officials, healthcare providers, and community leaders.

Thank You!

We would like to acknowledge all of our donors and supporters over the last five years. We could not have done it without you!

Adam Ruben
Adrienne Alvord and J. Stacey Sullivan
Alan Smith
Alice and Renee Gidel
Alicia Funk
Alison Harvey and Dave Loera
Andy Cassano
Angel De Jesus Martinez
Annette Dunklin
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Barbara and Michael Getz
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Cindy Crockett
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Cledith Jennings
Clif Bar Family Foundation
Colleen and Bob Gilletti
Connie Taxiera
Consolations Vocal Band
Courtney Campbell



Thank You!

Culture Shock Yogurt
Cynthia Compton
Daniel Barth
Daniel Schoenfeld
Dave Lewicki
Dave Painter
David MacDonald
David McKay and Suzanne Koliche
Dee Samuels and Joel Shawn
Dick Heitzman
Don and Jane Pelton
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Gail and Charles Entrekin
Gary Gallelli
Gary Parsons and Stefanie Freydot
Gary Patton
George Sardina
Gerald Dion
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Granite Bay Flycasters
Greater Champion Neighborhood Association
Greg Valerio
Gregory Meagher
Hannah Darrin
Hannah Savage
Heather O'Hara
Heidi Lyss
Holly Fraumeni
Ioana Hampton
James Taxiera
Jane Townsend
Janet Cohen and Chris Scammon

Organizing Investment in the Sierra

The Sierra Fund works to stimulate philanthropic investment in the region by providing a vehicle for donors to target their giving through strategic grants and loans. Over the last five years our various funds have contributed over \$209,500 toward a resilient future for Californians.

Donor Advised Funds

Funk Donor Advised Fund: Founded in 2002 by Michael and Judith Funk, the Fund has targeted investment in organic food and helped to build strong Sierra organizations.

John and Patty Brissenden Donor Advised Fund: Established in 2005, the Brissenden Fund has made significant donations to organizations in healthcare, education, environment, and social causes.

David and Kathy Welch Fund: The Welch Fund, founded in 2003, provides regular gifts to conservation activities in the Sierra and Northern California.

Sorensen's Resort Fund: The Sorensen's Fund was established in 2005 to return 10% of profits from the Sorenson's Resort, located in Hope Valley, to charities annually.

Sarah Forslund Fund for Environmental Leadership: Conceived in 2002 in memory of founding board member of The Sierra Fund Sarah Forslund, this fund makes three grants annually to: Green Corps; an organization led by a Green Corps graduate; and a cutting-edge cause in the Sierra.

Gerald and Barbara Meral Fund: Founded in 2004, the Meral Fund has made regular gifts to organizations dedicated to protecting and restoring Sierra resources.



Philanthropic Services

Cosumnes, American, Bear, Yuba

Integrated Regional Watershed Management Group

In 2013, The Sierra Fund stepped into a leadership role to strengthen and rebuild an important vehicle for funding in our local watersheds, the CABY IRWMG (Cosumnes, American, Bear, Yuba Integrated Regional Water Management Group). The CABY IRWM is the sole vehicle for Department of Water Resources (DWR) funding for coordinated watershed planning efforts and subsequent execution of this watershed's improvement projects. With The Sierra Fund's guidance CABY has submitted and received funding for two multi-partner programs in the region over the last five years. The Sierra Fund serves as contract administrator and fiscal manager for these projects facilitating the success of critical water quality projects for Sierra Nevada ecosystems and communities.

Tribute Trail

In 2010 The Sierra Fund took the reins of the Deer Creek Tribute Trail project, a trail building and restoration project to enhance walkability and outdoor recreational opportunities for Nevada City residents and visitors. Since 2011 this project has resulted in the construction of two state-of-the-art bridges that span key sections of Deer Creek and the involvement and recognition of both the Original People of our community and the Chinese Pioneers. In the span of just five short years the Tribute Trail has become a popular all-season destination for locals and out-of-towners alike.

Fiscal Sponsorship

The Sierra Fund serves as fiscal sponsor for three Sierra Nevada organizations, increasing regional capacity on both slopes of the range of light.

Bear Creek Watershed Group: this organization, located in western Shasta county, works to gather and integrate existing information of the physical, cultural, and demographic variables, which characterize the Bear Creek watershed presently as well as in the past.

Bodie Hills Conservation Partnership: is a coalition of organizations working toward the permanent protection of the Bodie Hills, an American treasure with exceptional scenic, historic and recreational value. Bodie Hills Conservation Partnership is located in the southwestern Sierra Nevada.

Local Water Stays Local: the mission of Local Water Stays Local is to safeguard the availability of fresh water and clean air and to maintain the quality of life in and around Shingletown, CA in Shasta County.

Ways to Give

The Sierra Fund offers individuals the opportunity to leave a lasting legacy by contributing to efforts that will help protect and restore ecosystem and community resiliency in the Sierra Nevada. When properly structured, these charitable gifts can: reduce your income taxes, reduce or eliminate capital gain taxes, reduce gift or estate taxes, provide life income for you or your family and/or pass assets on to your heirs with reduced taxation. Contact The Sierra Fund for more details.

Thank You!

Jean and B. Lynn
Jennifer and Benjamin Johnson
Jennifer Frank
Jerry and Barbara Meral
Jill Miller
Jim Pompy
JoAnn Marie
Joanne Hughes
John Boesel and Arianna Van Meurs
John Hoskins
John Johnson
Joseph and Vera Long Foundation
Joseph Walter
Joyce Lo
Judy Parks and Bob Blackburn
Judy Summers
Julia and Christopher Grimsrud
Julia Laney
Julie Jurs and Raymond Garcia
Justin Sternberg
Karen Cox
Karen Innis
Karen Van Epen and Max Kroschel
Karen Voorhees
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Kendra Zamzow
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Linda Rachmel and Roger Hicks
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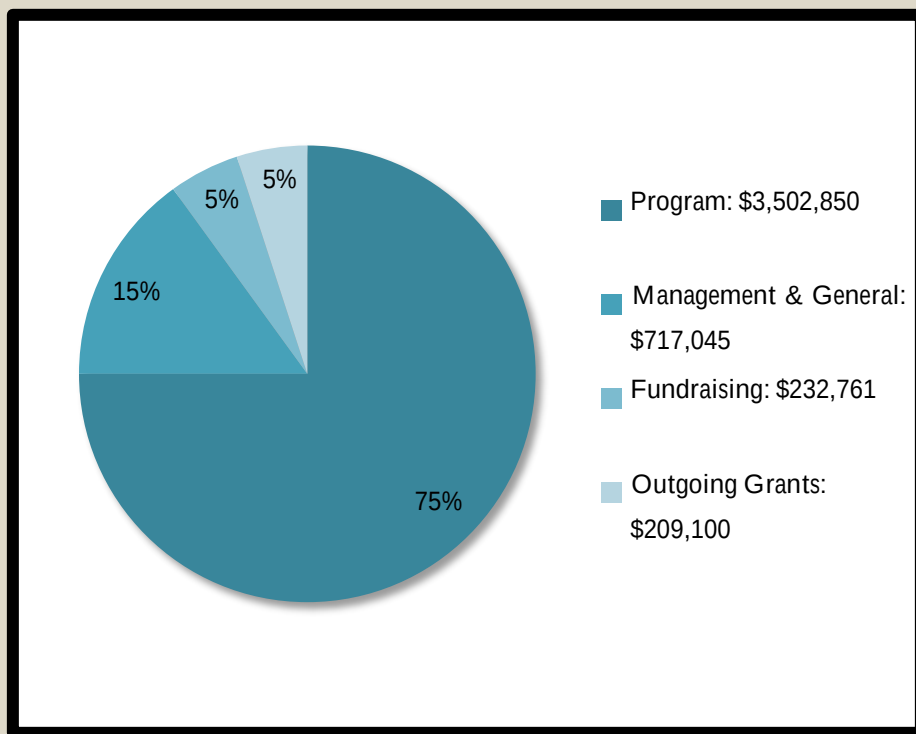
*Celebrating Fifteen Years of Effective
Action to Save the Sierra...*



THE SIERRA FUND

Financial Statement

5 Years of Cumulative Expenses: 2012-2016



Thank You!

Lonna Whipple
Lucetta Swift
Luke and Heather Hunt
Lynne Anderson
Martha Davis
Martin Taber
Marty and Jeff Coleman
Matt Murray
McKenzie Funk
Michael and Alicia Funk
Michael Paparian
Michat Gurlkout
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Mountain Recreation
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Ralph Cutter
Randy and Karen Barrow
Rebecca Metzger
Reel Anglers Fly Shop
Rex Frazier
Rich Walkling
Richard Booth
Richard Taylor and Tracy Grubbs
Rick Humphreys and Elizabeth Haven
Rob and Suzanne Ferroggiaro
Robert and Carol Berman
Robert and Edie Kirkwood



Reclaiming the Sierra 2012-2016

Over the last five years we have been extremely successful in implementing our pilot-to-action approach whereby we identify key opportunities to develop strategies aimed at assessing and addressing the unique issues that face our region.

Malakoff Diggins State Historic Park

Since 2011, The Sierra Fund has been working with partners to characterize the Malakoff Diggins mine site. Now a State Historic Park, Malakoff Diggins was a gold mine operated for over twenty years in the 19th century. In 2015 we publically released our findings from Phase 1 of the project in *The Humbug Creek Watershed Assessment and Management Recommendations* document. The key element of this report is a set of recommendations to abate the water quality impairment associated with Malakoff in a manner that is not in conflict with the need to protect cultural resources at the site. In 2016 funding was awarded in the Governor's budget (2016/2017) to complete cultural studies and to retain a consultant to lead the EIR process required for CEQA. Governor Brown's recently released proposed 2017/2018 budget includes funds to protect water quality in the South Yuba River from historic mining activities through a one-time appropriation of \$8,201,000 that would be available for two years to implement the remediation plan being developed for Malakoff Diggins. Throughout this process, The Sierra Fund has played an increasingly vital role in coordinating and facilitating relationships between State Parks (landowner) and technical, regulatory, and professional entities (including the US Geological Survey, Holdrege and Kull Consulting Engineers & Geologists, the Department of Conservation, California State University Chico, Sonoma State University, and the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board).

Combie Reservoir Mercury & Sediment Removal

The Nevada Irrigation District's pilot project at Combie Reservoir, in collaboration with The Sierra Fund, the US Geological Survey and others, is the first effort ever undertaken to determine if removing mercury-contaminated sediment as part of dredging to maintain reservoir capacity can reduce the amount of mercury in reservoir releases. The Science Director at The Sierra Fund, Dr. Carrie Monohan, is the lead scientist on this project, and has designed and executed several sampling protocols for water quality as NID works to remove elemental mercury from dredged sediment before it is able to methylate and enter the food chain, a process that once proven will be applicable to reservoirs receiving mercury pollution throughout California and around the world. The Governor's 2017/2018 budget proposal includes \$6.13 million over 3 years to scale up this project to full operation.



Environmental Health Outreach

Our environmental health outreach work to address legacy mining impacts on human health has focused on two pathways of exposure to mining toxics – the consumption of mercury contaminated fish and the inhalation or inadvertent ingestion of contaminated dust.

Mercury Contaminated Fish

To address legacy mercury contamination of Sierra Nevada fish populations, we have worked tirelessly over the last five years to increase the amount and accessibility of information on this issue. Our multi-faceted approach has included conducting 350+ angler surveys to understand local catch and consumption patterns, the collection of more than 160 fish tissue samples to provide the necessary data for the Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA) to release site-specific consumption advisories, and extensive outreach activities including tabling and professional presentations that have resulted in our educating over 400 individuals annually. For the last two years we have executed a fish consumption advisory-posting effort in our region that leverages one the greatest victories of our health outreach work in 2013 - the release of “safe eating guidelines” for fish from all of California’s lakes and reservoirs that do not already have site-specific guidelines. Prior to OEHHA releasing these guidelines, only seven lakes and reservoirs in the Sierra Nevada had state-issued fish consumption advisories in effect. Unfortunately, no agency or landowner is required to post the guidelines. In 2015 we stepped in to remedy this gap in information, designing and executing a volunteer led event to post fish consumption advisories at water bodies where they apply. To date our “Post-It Day” pilot project has resulted in over 140 fish consumption advisory signs directly posted, over 50 fish consumption advisory signs delivered to water body owners and operators for internal posting, and the development of a model posting protocol that has been distributed to key public health agencies and organizations throughout California.

Dusty Exposures

To increase awareness about the exposure risk to arsenic, lead and asbestos in the Sierra Nevada we examined the proximity of popular recreational trails to abandoned mines. A trail assessment was conducted to provide preliminary information on the potential for human exposure to mining toxins from activities such as off-highway vehicle (OHV) riding, mountain biking, horseback riding, running and hiking. Surface soil samples were taken in recreation areas impacted by mine waste or naturally occurring hazardous substances and evaluated to identify contaminants of concern and potentially high risk recreation areas. Based on the soil sample results recommendations were developed to further characterize health risk factors to recreationists at specific locations. As a follow-up to this project a tri-fold informational brochure was produced and has been utilized at outreach events over the last five years to educate residents about how to protect their health when recreating on local trails.



Mining Law Reform

Over the last five years we have successfully spearheaded key policy reform actions to ensure that California ecosystems and communities are spared from additional mining impacts.

Suction Dredge Mining Reform

Suction dredge mining devastates river ecosystems and causes mercury pollution, damage to wildlife, compromised water quality, and impacts on noise, air, and cultural resources. The work of The Sierra Fund has been critical in drawing attention to this issue, inciting decision makers and regulatory agencies within the State to institute a moratorium on the practice in 2009. Unfortunately, on January 12, 2015 the San Bernardino Superior Court ruled in *The People v. Rinehart* that the moratorium on suction dredge mining on federal land is in violation of federal law per the Federal Mining Act of 1872. The Sierra Fund acted quickly to address this shocking decision so that gains that have been made in protecting our State's resources would not be lost. Our advocacy efforts were successful and CA Senator Ben Allen agreed to sponsor a bill (SB 637) that requires suction dredge miners to obtain water quality permits from the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB). The bill was signed into law by Governor Brown on October 9, 2015, requiring Clean Water Act permits for motorized suction dredge mining in California's waterways.

Surface Mining and Reclamation Act

California's Surface Mining and Reclamation Act was passed in 1975 and signed into law by then-Governor Jerry Brown. Exactly 40 years later, in 2015, Governor Brown convened stakeholders interested in SMARA in a process designed to evaluate and find ways to improve the law. The Sierra Fund's CEO Elizabeth "Izzy" Martin, was invited to participate in this process, which included weekly meetings in the Governor's office and was able to provide critical input. The Sierra Fund also worked with Senator Fran Pavley to help identify opportunities to improve consistent enforcement of SMARA. These opportunities relating to inspections, financial assurance mechanisms, and reclamation plans include ultimately requiring the Department of Conservation to begin to offer continuing educational opportunities for lead agency employees to become certified by the department to inspect surface mining operations. In 2016 the Governor signed two bills, SB 209 (Pavley) and AB 1142 (Gray), written to amend SMARA and improve enforcement and reclamation of mine sites in California. These returns, sponsored by TSF, represent the most significant reforms to mining law in a generation.



THE SIERRA FUND

The Long View

Over the last year The Sierra Fund has devoted substantial time and energy to the development of a forward thinking strategic plan to guide our work into the future. We invite you to read our new Platform for Action and join us in achieving our goal of:

Restoring ecosystem and community resiliency
in the Sierra Nevada



Thank You!

Robert Johnston
Robert Reeb
Robert Scowcroft and Judith Fried
Robin Bush
Rose Foundation
Rural County Representatives of CA
Ryan Jones
Sally and Gary Gardner
Samuel Gitchel and Nancy Bleile
Sandrin Matiassek
Sara Ullom
Sarah Pender
Scott Schnappauf
Shannon Welch
Sherry Bartolucci
Sierra Nevada Brewing Company
Sierra Nevada Conservancy
Sierra Watch
Sorensen's Resort
Stefanie Freydon and Gary Parsons
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The Truffle Shop
Thomas Parilo
Tiffany & Co. Foundation
Timothy Seward and Stephanie Hague
Tracfone
Truckee Charter School Foundation
True North Foundation
Trust for Public Land
United Auburn Indian Community
Warren and Ingrid Knox
Wendy and Grant Swanson
Weneta Kosmala
Wiley R. Martin
William Orr

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Alex Keeble-Toll, Program Manager
Beth Bordner, Operations Manager
Jenny Michael, Office Manager
Judy Parks, Finance Manager
Amber Taxiera, Operations and Finance Coordinator
Kelsey Westfall, Outreach Coordinator and Policy Assistant

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Emily Rivenes
Susan Ferrier
Shawn Garvey
Joey Jordan
Terry Lowe
Mike Thornton

Contact Us!

The Sierra Fund

103 Providence Mine Road, Suite 101 - Nevada City, California 95959
(530) 265-8454 - info@sierrafund.org
www.sierrafund.org



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The Sierra Fund

103 Providence Mine Road Suite 101

Nevada City, CA 95959

(530) 265-8454 – info@sierrafund.org

www.sierrafund.org