



2023 Mid-Year Accomplishments

First-Ever Hydraulic Mine Remediation Site Gets Full Watershed Restoration Makeover

The Sierra Fund is breaking ground on new techniques for remediating abandoned hydraulic mine sites. The Sierra Fund spent a week in the spring with Symbiotic Restoration's crew of ten installing process-based restoration treatments at Grizzly Creek Diggins.

The work crew placed **post-assisted log structures** in eroding ditches to help capture sediment runoff and reduce incisions. They constructed a **Zuni bowl** – lining a plunge pool with rocks to stop a head-cut moving up the watershed – which reduces sediment runoff and restores hydrologic function. The crews also did “**gully stuffing**” – placing small trees removed during fuel load reduction projects into the eroding gullies. This dissipates the power of the water running off, further reducing erosion. And most excitingly, the crews added more biochar to the site in addition to existing test plots we did in 2022. Biochar is a charcoal-like product made from small trees removed during fuel load reduction work. When added to the soil biochar improves soil health, sequesters carbon, and acts like a filter - reducing sediment runoff, and helping capture mercury runoff.



Photo: Work crew member installing a post-assisted log structure at Grizzly Creek.

Also, installing these nature-based solutions using hand crews instead of big equipment has low impact on the landscape! This is the first project of its kind combining hydraulic mine remediation, fuel load reduction, and other watershed restoration improvements. We hope to scale up this combined approach to support restoration around the region.

The Sierra Fund Advances Three Key Forest Projects with Three Tribes

In the first half of 2023, TSF finalized permitting to greenlight work on the ground for a property owned by the California Heritage: Indigenous Research Project (CHIRP), the nonprofit of the Nevada City Nisenan Tribe. The project will provide a new stretch of trail for public recreation, drill a well to support native plantings, do fuel load reduction to reduce wildfire risk, and other work to support tribal-led land management and cultural activities. TSF and CHIRP also started designing two interpretative trail signs.

TSF started contracting with the Todd's Valley Miwok-Maidu Cultural Foundation (TVMMCF), the nonprofit of the Colfax-Todd's Valley Consolidated Tribe (CTVCT), on a land-management project. The TVMMCF has land use authorization for 18.5 acres of BLM lands near Foresthill, California, and plans to expand that agreement to 59 acres. TSF secured grant funds to support the tribe in creating water storage on the site to support native plants re-establishing, cultural burning, and a native food garden.

TSF also worked with the Concow Maidu of Mooretown Rancheria to expand their forestry department's fuels treatment and resource protection work, including exploring hydraulic mine remediation and meadow restoration. Our partnership is communicating with the USFS about securing Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) and other funds for Mooretown to advance integrated forest health projects on the Tahoe National Forest. We also worked with Mooretown to submit some state grant proposals to advance their land-management goals.



The Sierra Fund Hires New Staff – Lightening Load for All

In 2023 The Sierra Fund increased our staff from 6 to 8! We welcomed Beth Border, Finance and Operations Director, and Syd Godfrey, Project Coordinator. These critical positions fill gaps in our staff's capacity, better supporting senior management to focus on advancing innovative programs, securing more funding streams to support the Sierra conservation movement, and growing partnerships to increase the pace and scale of our work.