

# Staff Report

**TO:** Board of Directors

**FROM:** Greg Jones, Assistant General Manager  
Neysa King, Environmental Resources Administrator

**DATE:** September 27, 2023

**SUBJECT:** **SNC Grant Application for Upper Middle Yuba Watershed Forest Restoration Project – NEPA Planning**

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## ***ADMINISTRATION***

### **RECOMMENDATION:**

Adopt Resolution No. 2023-42 Approving the Application for Grant Funds for the Sierra Nevada Conservancy's Wildfire Recovery and Forest Resilience Directed Grant Program (#1688) for the Upper Middle Yuba Watershed Forest Restoration Project: USFS NEPA Planning and directing the General Manager or designee to execute the required documents.

### **BACKGROUND:**

On June 14<sup>th</sup>, 2023, NID submitted a pre-proposal to the Sierra Nevada Conservancy's Wildfire Recovery & Forest Resilience Directed Grants Program (SNC Project #1688) and was invited to submit a full proposal due by the September 29, 2023 deadline. In partnership with the United States Forest Service, Board authorization is requested and required to submit the "Upper Middle Yuba Watershed Forest Restoration Project: NEPA Planning" proposal to the Sierra Nevada Conservancy. Requirements of SNC grant applications and of NID's Policy No. 11200 – Grant Management require a board resolution to apply for and receive grant funding.

The NID source area watersheds are largely associated with the Middle Yuba River headwaters above and around Jackson Meadows Reservoir. This area is largely comprised of Tahoe National Forestlands, and there is a checkerboard pattern with the Sierra Pacific Industries owning the largest areas of non-public lands. NID has been working in this upper elevation area to complete multiple forestry and restoration projects, including the English Meadow Restoration Project (2019 – 2024), the Upper Yuba Headwaters Project (2024), and annual hazard fuel removal to ensure that our facilities and campgrounds are safe.

The USFS Tahoe National Forest and NID are partnering to complete this planning project with funding assistance from SNC. This is a unique partnership, as it is focused on the short-term planning and long-term restoration of USFS lands in and

around one of NID's critical watershed areas in a remote area of the Tahoe National Forest.

This region faces extreme wildfire risk. By working together, planning for forest health projects can be accelerated, and multi-benefit watershed improvement projects can be initiated. Additional project partners include the locally affiliated Tribes, the County of Nevada, Wildfires.org, and other user groups and/or private landowners/stakeholders within the region. This project is part of the Tahoe National Forest's ten-year forest restoration strategy.

The Tahoe National Forest will be contributing natural resource specialists' staff time to direct and review all documents and reports that are prepared by the contractor(s). NID and USFS have also drafted a Master Stewardship Agreement and anticipate executing this agreement to facilitate implementation projects of mutual interest and benefit to improve forest health and resilience in the Middle Yuba River watershed.

By taking the lead to apply for this grant, NID will become the fiscal agent and will administer the grant, including contracting with consultant(s) to support the USFS as it completes NEPA on 2,000 acres within this headwaters region.

**BUDGETARY IMPACT:**

This grant request includes 10% in administrative costs incurred by NID. NID staff will participate in the NEPA public review process as in-kind match. Tahoe National Forest and Sierraville Ranger District staff will develop project treatment locations, develop contractor scopes of work, provide information to and work directly with contractor(s) to ensure products meet the needs of the USFS survey and NEPA process. In addition, the USFS will utilize an interdisciplinary team of specialists (biologists, silviculturists, hydrologists, etc.) to review and revise all reports and documents. The Tahoe National Forest will be the lead NEPA agency.

**Funding amount requested:** \$386,100 (\$350,000 for NEPA consultants, \$35,100 NID grant and consultant administration, and \$1,000 for tribal participation)

**Total Project Cost, including in-kind:** \$556,100 (USFS staff time est. \$97,000; Wildfires.org NEPA support \$50,000, and NID staff time est. \$23,000)

**Schedule:** If selected for a grant award, grant execution should be complete by March 2024. Summer 2024-2025 will provide time for natural resource surveys and follow-up. NEPA decision memo is anticipated in December 2025.

NK & GJ

*Attachments (2)*

- Resolution 2023-42 Authorizing Application to the Sierra Nevada Conservancy for SNC Project #1688 Upper Middle Yuba Watershed Forest Restoration: NEPA Planning
- Grant proposal map



**RESOLUTION NO. 2023-42**  
**OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE NEVADA IRRIGATION DISTRICT**

**APPROVING THE APPLICATION FOR GRANT FUNDS FOR  
THE SIERRA NEVADA CONSERVANCY'S WILDFIRE RECOVERY AND FOREST  
RESILIENCE DIRECTED GRANT PROGRAM (#1688) FOR THE UPPER MIDDLE YUBA  
WATERSHED FOREST RESTORATION NEPA PLANNING PROJECT**

**WHEREAS**, the Legislature and Governor of the State of California have provided funds for the Sierra Nevada Conservancy to support the 2023 Wildfire Recovery and Forest Resilience Directed Grant Program (#1688); and

**WHEREAS**, the Sierra Nevada Conservancy has been delegated the responsibility for the administration of a portion of these funds through a Directed Grant Program, establishing necessary procedures; and

**WHEREAS**, said procedures established by the Sierra Nevada Conservancy require a Resolution certifying the approval of application(s) by the governing board of each applicant before submission of said application(s) to the SNC; and

**WHEREAS**, NID's Grant Management Policy No. 11120 requires Board approval for grant applications in excess of \$50,000; and

**WHEREAS**, the Upper Middle Yuba Watershed Restoration Project: USFS NEPA Planning addresses a short-term planning requirement in order to initiate long-term multi-benefit watershed improvement projects while mitigating the growing threat of extreme wildfire risk in and around the upper reaches of NID's critical watersheds; and

**WHEREAS**, the Nevada Irrigation District has identified the Upper Middle Yuba Watershed Forest Restoration Project: USFS NEPA Planning (the "Project") as valuable toward meeting its mission and goals; and

**WHEREAS**, the District intends to submit an application to the Sierra Nevada Conservancy for the Project; and

**WHEREAS**, the District, if selected, will enter into an agreement with the Sierra Nevada Conservancy to carry out the Project; and

**NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** by the Board of Directors of the Nevada Irrigation District that it does find as follows:

1. The above recitals are true and correct.
2. Approves the submittal of an application for the Project.

3. Certifies that the Nevada Irrigation District understands the assurances and certification requirements in the application.
4. Certifies that the Nevada Irrigation District will have sufficient funds to operate and maintain the resource(s) consistent with the long-term benefits described in support of the application or will secure the resources to do so.
5. Certifies that the Nevada Irrigation District will comply with all legal requirements as determined during the application process.
6. Appoints its General Manager, or designee, as agent to conduct all negotiations, execute and submit all documents, including but not limited to applications, agreements, payment requests, and so on, which may be necessary for the completion of the aforementioned project(s).

**PASSED AND ADOPTED** by the Board of Directors of the Nevada Irrigation District at a regular meeting held on the 27th day of September, 2023, by the following vote:

<b>AYES:</b>	Directors:
<b>NOES:</b>	Directors:
<b>ABSENT:</b>	Directors:
<b>ABSTAINS:</b>	Directors:

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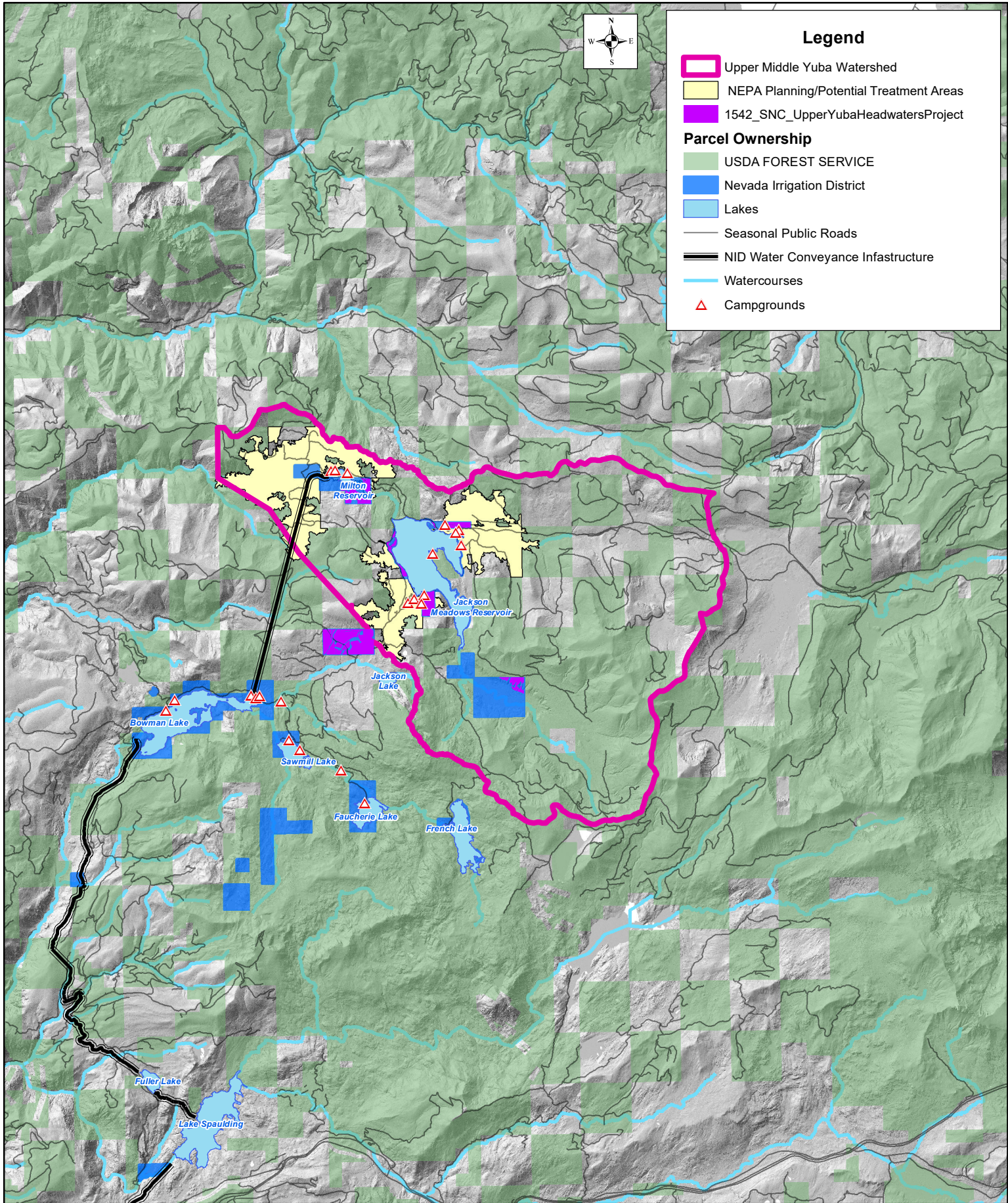
President of the Board of Directors

**Attest:**

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Secretary to the Board of Directors

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**Legend**

- Upper Middle Yuba Watershed
- NEPA Planning/Potential Treatment Areas
- 1542\_SNC\_UpperYubaHeadwatersProject

**Parcel Ownership**

- USDA FOREST SERVICE
- Nevada Irrigation District
- Lakes
- Seasonal Public Roads
- NID Water Conveyance Infrastructure
- Watercourses
- Campgrounds

**SNC Project #1688**  
**Upper Middle Yuba Watershed Forest Restoration: NEPA Planning Area**



Date: 6/14/2023  
 Drawn By: C. TOWNSEND

**NEVADA IRRIGATION DISTRICT**  
 NEVADA COUNTY -- PLACER COUNTY  
 GRASS VALLEY, CALIFORNIA

Scale: 1: 158,400  
 Sheet: 2 of 2 **5**