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SIERRA NEVADA ALLIANCE

**Embargoed for Release
6:00 a.m., August 5, 2008**

News Release

First of its Kind Guide Helps Homeowners Create Wildfire Defensible Space and a Sierra Friendly Yard and Garden

New resource released today helps Sierra residents achieve a beautiful, low maintenance yard while addressing multiple goals

(Sierra Nevada, CA)—As wildfires rage across California, the Sierra Nevada Alliance offers a first of its kind guide to homeowners for creating a beautiful Sierra friendly yard and garden that:

- Guards against wildfire
- Is easy to care for and meets a family's goals
- Exists in harmony with wildlife
- Uses low maintenance, native plants
- Protects and conserves community drinking water.

“*Sierra Nevada Yard & Garden* is one stop shopping – defend your home from wildfire, protect water quality, create a low maintenance yard and more,” said Genevieve Jessop Marsh, Sierra Nevada Alliance Watersheds Program Associate. “The guide shows homeowners how to get beautiful gardens and yards that *don't* require fuss for folks in the Sierra foothills, Eastern Sierra, and high country.”

The full color 157 page guide is very user friendly and available for free on the Sierra Nevada Alliance website and for \$14.00 plus shipping and handling for hard copies. The guide uses an innovative zone and island approach to fire safe designs and takes homeowners through a step-wise process: observe, design, select, and implement, making Sierra friendly yards simple and easy to create. The guide also includes chapters and appendices focused on plant selection, how-to, and yard and garden resources by sub-regions of the Sierra. The guide is filled with real-life features of Sierra homeowners gardening from 900 feet to 6,200 feet in elevation.

“We saw a number of guides addressing one goal at a time – protecting water quality, water conservation, wildfire, invasive plants – but nothing helped the homeowner achieve those all goals at

once,” continued Marsh. “We designed this guide to make it easy for residents and second homeowners to be Sierra Friendly and achieve their personal goals for their yards and gardens.”

The guide was created with support from the California Resource Conservation Districts, Sierra Nevada Conservancy, University of Nevada Cooperative Extension and State Water Resources Control Board. Many experts were involved in helping write, edit and review the guide – including experts on living with wildlife, wildfire, water protection, water conservation, soil health, invasive and native plants, and gardening.

“A well designed and maintained yard helps expand living space, suits your needs, and contributes to the high quality of life found in the Sierra Nevada,” Tacy Currey of the California Association of Resource Conservation Districts. “No matter what goals you have for your garden – this guide shows practical, easy to follow steps, tips, and how-to’s to meet your needs while being Sierra friendly.”

Sierra Nevada Yard & Garden is unique not only in blending multiple goals, but in its Sierra focus. The guide was developed for yards and gardens throughout the 400 mile long mountain range and California Cascade. The guide includes specifics for Sierra vegetation zones which include the foothills, mixed conifers, montane, upper montane and alpine, eastside communities, and Modoc Plateau. It also provides soil, wildlife and wildfire risk information and encourages use of natural Sierra assets in an outdoor space.

“The guide is useful from Quincy to Springville, Jackson to Mono Lake,” said guide editor, Michelle Sweeney. “The Alliance made focusing on all of the Sierra a priority—from foothills to high country.”

Sierra Nevada Yard & Garden is filled with pictures and illustrations, making the information accessible and fun to read, in addition to being extremely practical. The guide is focused on helping Sierrans create an attractive and easy to maintain yard that meets goals such as having family play areas, outdoor eating space, vegetable gardens and other relaxation areas. All the while, the guide ensures that its tips and practices also help the resident protect their home from wildfire, while protecting Sierra waters, lands and wildlife.

“You don’t have to be Martha Stewart or John Muir to want this guide,” said Marsh. “It’s designed for any Sierra resident who has a yard and wants some tips or resources for their outdoor space. What is unique is that every tip and step helps you meet your personal goals while also helping your home region – the Sierra.”

Copies of the guide will be available on the Sierra Nevada Alliance website for free or for ordering a hard copy for \$14 plus shipping at www.sierranevadaalliance.org. Individuals may also call 530-542-4546 x 301. The Sierra Nevada Alliance will soon be working with conservation partners and interested yard and garden stores to distribute the guide in communities throughout the 400 mile Sierra Nevada.

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To download photos of Sierra friendly yards and gardens, go to <ftp://sierranevadaalliance.org>, enter Username: snaclient, password: ftp. Click on Sierra Nevada Yard and Garden Photos file folder.

“Funding for this project has been provided in full or part through an agreement with the State Water Resources Control Board. The contents of this document do not necessarily reflect the views and policies of the State Water Board, nor does mention of trade names or commercial products constitute endorsement or recommendation for use.”