

## Mastication and a Visit from the CCC (California Conservation Corps.)

Through grant funding made possible by the Sierra Nevada Conservancy, SFC has had the opportunity to implement much needed fuels reduction work on the Stockton Creek Preserve. This 480 acre Preserve is located in Mariposa, a short distance from the town center and is the only SFC Preserve open to the public. The history of the Stockton Creek Preserve is one of collaboration and community conservation. Partnerships, with Mariposa Public Utilities District (MPUD), Sierra Nevada Conservancy, CAL FIRE, Mariposa County High School and UC Merced as well as generous volunteers and donors who have made the conservation and the ongoing stewardship of the Preserve possible.

Our local California Conservation Corps. (CCC) from Stockton donated 2 ½ weeks of fuels reduction work on the Preserve. The crew completed various forest management practices to reduce fire hazard, like pruning of trees and shrubs to reduce ladder fuels, falling of dead and dying beetle infested pines and the piling of debris left from the mastication. Mastication is an effective form of fuels reduction that uses heavy equipment combined with a “mastication head”, which is basically an attachment that chews and chips, limbs, shrubs and young trees in overstocked landscapes. Reducing fire hazard on the Preserve is a priority for SFC and for landowner, MPUD. The Preserve boasts a series of trails and vistas open for hiking and biking but perhaps most importantly the town’s drinking water is stored and collected on site in the Stockton Creek Reservoir. Consequently protecting the reservoir’s water quality and quantity is imperative for the town of Mariposa, mastication and forest management are one of the many ways that SFC can steward the land to enhance the natural resources and prevent wildfire.

SFC would like to again thank the amazing CCC crew from Stockton who gave their time and resources!

-Article and photos contributed by Lauren Hubert

