



## **Sierra Nevada Watershed Improvement Program**

# **Proposition 1 & Proposition 68**

## **GRANT GUIDELINES**

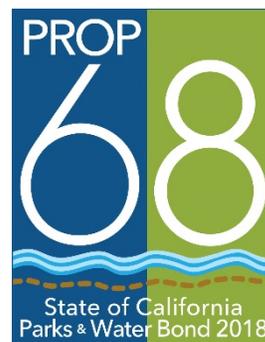
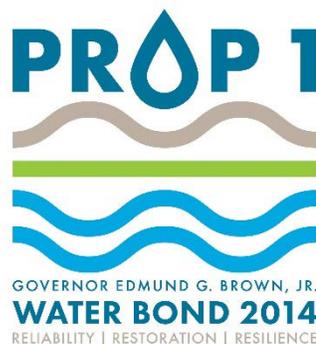
### **FUNDED BY THE**

**Water Quality, Supply, and Infrastructure Improvement Act of 2014**

**and**

**California Drought, Water, Parks, Climate, Coastal Protection,**

**and Outdoor Access For All Act of 2018**



*The Sierra Nevada Conservancy initiates, encourages, and supports efforts that improve the environmental, economic, and social well-being of the Sierra Nevada Region, its communities, and the citizens of California.*

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***These proposed Guidelines will become effective if SNC Governing Board acts to approve them. Availability of all funds is contingent upon passage of the FY 2018-19 California State Budget.***

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# I. INTRODUCTION

## Background

The Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) is a California state agency that initiates, encourages, and supports efforts that improve the environmental, economic, and social well-being of the Sierra Nevada Region, its communities, and the citizens of California.

The [Laird-Leslie Sierra Nevada Conservancy Act](#) (Act), enacted in 2004, and commencing with Public Resources Code (PRC) Section 33300, established the SNC; Sections 33343 and 33346 set forth the authority for SNC to award grants of funds in order to carry out the purposes of the Act. The [SNC Strategic Plan](#) is developed in accordance with the Act and provides general direction for SNC activities and the Grant Guidelines (Guidelines).

Forested watersheds of the Sierra Nevada Region (Region) provide more than sixty percent of California's developed water supply and are the primary source of fresh water flowing into the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta. These forests filter water, store snowpack, and slow runoff from winter storms, producing the high-quality and reliable water supply that Californians depend on. However, many forests in the Sierra Nevada are unhealthy and at risk for disease and uncharacteristically large wildfires.

The [Sierra Nevada Watershed Improvement Program \(WIP\)](#) is a coordinated, integrated, collaborative program to restore the health of California's primary watershed through increased investment, needed policy changes, and increased infrastructure. This comprehensive effort is organized and coordinated by the SNC in close partnership with other federal, state, and local agencies, as well as diverse stakeholders, and aims to increase the pace and scale of restoration in the Region.

The threat that declining forest health places on the reliability and quality of California's water supply is so great that many statewide plans have called for action to restore forests in order to safeguard the state's primary water source. The [California Water Action Plan](#), developed by the California Natural Resources Agency, Environmental Protection Agency, and California Department of Food and Agriculture, clearly recognizes the importance of the Sierra to the state's water resources and specifically calls for restoration of forest health through ecologically sound forest management. In addition, the [2016 California Water Action Plan Update](#) points to climate change, long-term drought, and catastrophic fires in the Sierra Nevada as fundamental threats to the state's water supply, and identifies a critical need to address forest management and ecosystem restoration and conservation in the Sierra to protect water resources for California.

In 2011, Governor Brown signed AB 685, the Human Right to Water (HRTW) ([Water Code Section 106.3](#)). The legislation states that "every human has the right to safe, clean, affordable, and accessible water adequate for human consumption, cooking, and sanitary purposes." The law requires all relevant state agencies to consider the HRTW

“when revising, adopting, or establishing policies, regulations, and grant criteria” relevant to achieving the human right to water.

The California Natural Resources Agency’s [Safeguarding California Plan: 2018 Update](#) augments and identifies strategies regarding adaptations and risk management relating to climate change. This plan states, “Efforts to improve forest health not only make forests more capable of withstanding climate impacts (and avoids the negative impacts associated with forest losses), but those efforts will also increase the long-term carbon storage capacity of forests and aid in fighting climate change.”

[California’s 2012 Bioenergy Action Plan](#) includes a broad array of action items related to the promotion of forest bioenergy, and the Sierra Nevada Conservancy is identified as one of the key responsible agencies for implementing those action items. Utilizing biomass, the small-diameter woody material and diseased or insect-infested wood generated from forest restoration projects, to create energy will help the state meet environmental mandates such as reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. Value created from biomass can also help fund restoration activities that create jobs in rural regions, reduce fire danger, improve air and water quality, and reduce waste.

## Proposition 1 & Proposition 68 Competitive Grant Program

### *Proposition 1*

California voters passed [Proposition 1, The Water Quality, Supply, and Infrastructure Improvement Bond Act of 2014](#), on November 4, 2014. Proposition 1 added Section 79731 to the California Water Code (CWC), authorizing the state to issue bonds, and the Legislature to appropriate the proceeds, for multibenefit water quality, water supply, and watershed protection and restoration projects for the watersheds of the state. Section 79731(i) of the CWC allocates \$25 million of these funds for SNC.

### *Proposition 68*

California voters passed [Proposition 68, the California Drought, Water, Parks, Climate, Coastal Protection, and Outdoor Access For All Act of 2018](#), on June 5, 2018. Proposition 68 added Section 80130 to the Public Resources Code, authorizing the state to issue bonds, and the Legislature to appropriate the proceeds, for the planning, development, and implementation of climate adaptation and resiliency projects. Section 80135(c) allocates \$25 million of these funds to SNC for purposes of implementing the WIP.

### *Competitive Grant Program*

The focus of this Grant Program is on forest health projects that result in multiple watershed benefits, consistent with the following purposes:

- Implement fuel treatment projects to reduce wildfire risks, protect watersheds tributary to water storage facilities, and promote watershed health.
- Protect and restore rural and urban watershed health to improve watershed storage capacity, forest health, protection of life and property, and greenhouse gas reduction.
- Implement watershed adaptation projects to reduce the impacts of climate changes on California's communities and ecosystems.

Forest health is a primary goal identified in a variety of SNC plans and programs. Projects that create or improve forest conditions result in a combination of multiple watershed and ecosystem benefits such as improved water quality, reduced erosion, and improved water yield. Other important benefits include reduced likelihood of high-intensity fire and the negative consequences of such fires; protection and enhancement of natural resources and habitat; improved air and water quality; and increased carbon sequestration, stable carbon storage, and reduced GHG emissions. The projects also support regional economies and build the capacity of local communities and collaboratives. To further promote achieving watershed health goals, the SNC will coordinate with other state agencies' GHG and forest and habitat restoration grant programs to achieve maximum resource benefits.

Applicants with projects not eligible under these Guidelines are urged to contact [SNC Area Representatives](#) to identify alternative funding opportunities and other assistance.

## Grant Guidelines and Grant Applications

The Grant Guidelines describe project eligibility and the process used by the SNC to solicit proposals, evaluate applications, and authorize grants under the WIP Grant Program.

SNC requires that pre-applications and full applications be submitted via an online process. The online application and associated materials and forms will be made available for public use following the release of the Request for Proposals. Applicants should read and be familiar with the Grant Guidelines and have a copy of the Grant Guidelines available as a reference when completing the online application. SNC strongly recommends that applicants consult with SNC Area Representatives early in the development of a project.

For applicants interested in more information about the administrative requirements once a grant is authorized, sample grant agreements are provided at: <http://www.sierranevada.ca.gov/other-assistance/applying-for-a-grant>. Another good resource for information is the Managing Your Grant Handbook, available [here](#).

## II. GRANT PROGRAM INFORMATION

### Applicant Eligibility

Grant funds may be authorized for:

- Public agencies: Any city, county, special district, joint powers authority, state agency, or federal agency)

**Please Note:**

- Federal agencies are eligible to receive funds under Proposition 68, and thus may apply directly for a grant. Grants awarded to federal agencies will be sourced only from Proposition 68.
- Federal agencies are not eligible to receive funds under Proposition 1. However, an eligible entity may receive Proposition 1 grant funds as a partner to a federal agency, for a project on federal land.
- Qualifying 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations: "Nonprofit Organization" means a private, nonprofit organization that qualifies for exempt status under Section 501(c)(3) of Title 26 of the United States Code, and whose charitable purposes are consistent with the purposes of the SNC.
- Eligible Tribal Entities: Includes any Indian tribe, band, nation, or other organized group or community, or a tribal agency authorized by a tribe, which is recognized as eligible for special programs and services provided by the United States to Indians because of their status as Indians and is identified in Number 19 of Volume 81, pages 5019-5025 (January 29, 2016) of the Federal Register, as that list may be updated or amended from time to time.

**NOTE:** SNC's governing statute does not allow grants to mutual water companies or to state Indian tribes on the Native American Heritage Commission's California Tribal Consultation List (entities otherwise eligible under Proposition 1), unless the state Indian tribes also meet the Eligible Tribal Entities criteria listed above.

### Project Funding and Eligibility

Grants for Category One on-the-ground implementation projects, and Category Two activities that will lead to a specific, future on-the-ground project(s), will be considered by the SNC for projects meeting the criteria described below.

To be eligible to receive a grant award from the SNC under this program, projects must meet all of the following criteria:

- Be located within a conifer or mixed-conifer forested area of the Sierra Nevada Region.

- Be consistent with the SNC mission and program areas as defined in the SNC Strategic Plan and the [Sierra Nevada Watershed Improvement Program \(WIP\)](#).
- Meet the forest and watershed health requirements of [Proposition 1](#) and/or [Proposition 68](#).
- Result in a clear and demonstrable public benefit.

## Grant Categories

### *Category One Projects*

Category One grants include site improvement projects, as well as fee title acquisition projects that support forest products manufacturing and/or biomass utilization facilities that increase capacity to improve forest and watershed health.

Examples of potential Category One grant projects include, but are not limited to:

- Implementation of fuel treatment projects (including mechanical treatments, hand treatments, and/or prescribed fire) that will reduce wildfire risks, protect watersheds tributary to water storage facilities, and promote watershed health. These projects may include utilization of biomass and/or a full range of forest products (including saw logs), resulting from sustainable activities associated with improving forest health as referenced in California's 2012 Bioenergy Action Plan.
- Prevention or treatment of forest pests and invasive species.
- Reforestation and implementation of suitable stand improvement activities after wildfire or post-tree mortality clearing efforts.
- Forest management work, including the reduction of ladder fuels and canopy cover that will result in increased forest resilience, improved habitat conditions, improved snowpack management, and/or protection of biodiversity.
- Forest treatment projects that prevent and/or address the impacts of severe tree mortality. This project type must also include forest restoration activities, with focus on replanting or supporting natural regeneration of new trees.
- Forest treatment projects which include a meadow restoration component that will protect and preserve biodiversity of heterogeneous timber stands, reduce encroachment on high-value meadow habitat, restore aspen stands, increase fire resilience, and/or improve hydrological benefits such as streamflow volume and groundwater recharge.
- Vegetation treatments that increase carbon sequestration benefits and foster adaptation resiliency of vegetation considering predicted climate change.

- Fee title acquisitions that support forest products manufacturing and/or biomass utilization facilities that increase capacity to improve forest and watershed health.

### *Category Two Projects*

Category Two grants are limited to pre-project activities that are necessary for a specific, future on-the-ground project(s). The future projects(s) should be clearly identified in the proposal.

Examples of Category Two grant projects include, but are not limited to:

- Acquiring permits for a specific, future on-the-ground project(s).
- Analysis required to support complete California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), and/or National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) documentation for a specific, future on-the-ground project(s). Lead agencies need to be identified and demonstrate a willingness to complete adoption of CEQA/NEPA.
- Performing necessary cultural resources, biological, botanical, aquatic, soil, hydrologic, wildlife, timber, or other studies/surveys and/or developing necessary project designs related to a specific site or physical project(s).
- Preparing final project plans or supplementing existing plans that will result in a specific project(s).
- Pre-acquisition or due diligence activities that will directly result in a fee title acquisition that supports forest products manufacturing and/or biomass utilization facilities that increase capacity to improve forest and watershed health.
- Pre-acquisition or necessary due diligence activities (appraisals, appraisal review, baseline studies, habitat conservation plans, preliminary title reports, mineral title reports, Phase I Environmental Site Assessments, etc.) that may be required to secure funding for an easement or fee title acquisition of forest land for purposes that are consistent with the forest health objectives identified in these Guidelines.

**NOTE:** For all Category Two projects, applicants should submit a letter of support from all associated property owner(s) indicating their commitment to implement the project being planned.

### **Ineligible Projects**

Examples of ineligible projects include:

- Grants to service or repay loans.

- Projects dictated by a legal settlement or mandated to address a violation of, or an order (citation) to comply with, a law or regulation.
- Operations and maintenance of existing structures, including roads.
- Research, education, outreach, or event-related projects, although these types of activities may be included as a small part of the overall implementation of a project eligible for SNC grant funds.
- Fee title / easement acquisitions that are not explicitly described as eligible in these Guidelines.

This list is not exhaustive and is offered only as guidance to potential applicants. The SNC will make determinations of eligibility on a project-by-project basis. If an applicant has questions about the eligibility of their project, they should consult with their Area Representative.

## Project Development

These Guidelines govern the preparation, submittal, and review of grant applications proposals for the Sierra Nevada WIP Grant Program.

- Requests for Proposals (RFP) will be published and the solicitation period started following SNC Board approval of the Grant Guidelines. The RFP will provide details as to the schedule for each grant round, individual grant award limits and additional information relevant to that round.
- Applicants should contact the [SNC Area Representative](#) assigned to their county to determine whether a potential project is eligible for consideration.
- Pre-Applications and Applications must be submitted through the SNC online application system.
- Pre-Applications are mandatory. If a complete Pre-Application is not received by the specified deadline, the applicant will not be eligible to submit a full application.
- A mandatory site visit will be conducted for every eligible Category One Pre-Application. The purpose of the site visit is to provide the applicant an opportunity to clarify any questions that may assist with application development. Applicants are encouraged to invite tribal representatives who have been contacted through outreach efforts to participate in this site visit.
- Applicants shall consult with representatives of both the California Conservation Corps (CCC) (Email: [Prop1@ccc.ca.gov](mailto:Prop1@ccc.ca.gov)), and California Association of Local Conservation Corps (CALCC) (Email: [inquiry@prop1communitycorps.org](mailto:inquiry@prop1communitycorps.org)) to determine the feasibility of Corps participation. The Corps has developed

[Proposition 1 Water Bond Guidelines](#) that fully describe the consultation process. The process takes five business days to complete after an email submission of project details. Projects that solely involve either planning or acquisition activities are exempt from the consultation requirement. The application package submitted to SNC must include the response from both the CCC and the CALCC and the details related to work the Corps may undertake if it is feasible for them to do so. Applications that do not include documentation demonstrating that the CCC and CALCC have been consulted will be deemed noncompliant and will not be considered for funding. Please consult with your [Area Representative](#) to learn more details regarding use of CCC for implementation of the project.

- Applicants must attempt to contact and communicate with representatives from tribes whose ancestral homelands may be affected by the project. Documentation of the outreach and the outcomes of any resultant discussion must be included in the application. SNC Area Representatives can assist with identifying appropriate tribal representatives. SNC strongly encourages tribal participation in both planning and implementation projects.
- All project proposals are required to address how CEQA and, where necessary, NEPA compliance has been or will be achieved. If CEQA is not yet complete, the Lead Agency for CEQA must be identified in the full application, with a letter of support or other documentation from the Agency stating that they are eligible and willing to serve as Lead. The SNC requires all proposals comply with CEQA at the time the Board authorizes any grants.
- All project proposals are required to identify and state progress and projected dates of issuance for all permits necessary to implement the project.
- Grants awarded to support the focus area of healthy forests will have an indirect relationship toward the advancement of the Human Right to Water (HRTW). More than sixty percent of California's developed water supply originates in the Sierra Nevada Region, and Sierra Nevada forest lands are the natural infrastructure that capture, filter, and store precipitation. Applicants proposing projects for funding under this Grant Program should identify and describe the populations downstream that derive HRTW benefits from the project.
- In compliance with the [Professional Foresters Law](#) (PRC Sections 750-753, et seq.), Category One projects that directly impact the management and treatment of the forest resources and timberlands of this state are required to use Registered Professional Foresters. Projects implemented on federally managed lands will be permitted to use "qualified but exempt" federal staff to satisfy this requirement.

## Land Tenure Requirements

### *Category One Projects*

For all Category One projects, applicants must submit documentation to the SNC demonstrating that they have or will have adequate tenure to, and site control of, the properties to be improved or restored (minimum of ten years), and authority for SNC to monitor the project site for twenty-five (25) years.

Proof of adequate land tenure includes, but is not necessarily limited to:

- Fee title ownership
- An easement or license agreement
- Formal, signed agreement between the applicant and the fee title owner, or the owner of an easement in the property, sufficient to give the applicant adequate site control for the purposes of implementing the project and any necessary follow-up work.

When an applicant does not have tenure at the time of application, but intends to establish tenure via an agreement that will be signed following authorization of the grant, the applicant must submit a template copy of the proposed agreement at the time of application. This template must specifically and satisfactorily address the SNC land tenure requirements. A letter is required to be submitted with the full application from all property owners / managers indicating their intent to sign the template agreement if the grant is awarded. Once a project has been authorized for funding by the SNC Board, the applicant must submit signed documentation of land tenure before a grant agreement will be executed. If adequate land tenure documentation is not provided within 90 days of Board authorization, the SNC may revoke the grant award.

### *Category Two Projects*

For all Category Two projects, applicants must submit a letter from all property owners/managers indicating their awareness of and commitment to implement the project being planned.

**NOTE:** For projects involving multiple landowners, all landowners, or authorized designees, must provide satisfactory proof of land tenure.

## Special Requirements for Category One Acquisitions

A grant application for funds to acquire an interest in real property is required to specify all the following:

- The intended use of the property
- A description of how the acquisition will directly contribute to improved forest and watershed health
- The manner in which the land will be managed
- How the cost of ongoing management will be funded
- Development schedule and current business plan that articulates the viability of the project
- A recent appraisal (If the appraisal is older than one year, the applicant must consult with SNC staff prior to submission.) The SNC may require applicants to provide a Phase I or Phase II Environmental Site Assessment (toxics report) on any property proposed for acquisition. Applicants should consult with SNC staff to determine if this requirement is applicable.
- All applications for fee title acquisitions of property intended to support forest products manufacturing and/or biomass utilization facilities that increase capacity to improve forest and watershed health are required to have completed and approved CEQA documents for the acquisition and any specific future use or project to be built on the land.

### Long-term Management and Monitoring

- For at least 10 years following the date of project completion, the Category One project site shall be maintained, operated, and used in a manner consistent with the purposes of the project. Additionally, the grantee and/or property owner shall not use any portion of the project site for mitigation or as security for any debt. Applications must include a description of how the project area will be managed/maintained over time, by whom, and how funding will be provided for such work.
- Category One projects that are funded will be subject to monitoring for site conditions. The SNC and its officers, employees, agents, and representatives shall have access to monitor the project site for a minimum of twenty-five (25) years following completion of the project.
- If the project includes water quality monitoring data collection, the data should be reported to the [State Water Resources Control Board](#) (SWRCB) in a manner that is compatible and consistent with surface monitoring data systems or ground water monitoring data systems administered by the SWRCB.
- If the project includes watershed monitoring data collection, the data should be reported to the [Department of Conservation](#) (DOC) in a

manner that is compatible and consistent with the statewide watershed program administered by the DOC.

- The California Natural Resources Agency (CNRA) will lead landscape-scale quantification of greenhouse gas emissions reductions and carbon sequestration for all projects funded under Proposition 68, where feasible. SNC will coordinate with Grantees to assure requested information is submitted to CNRA.

## Environmental Documents

The SNC requires all proposals to comply with CEQA at the time the Board authorizes any grants. In addition to CEQA compliance, NEPA compliance is required for all projects proposed on federal land. The SNC relies heavily on previously completed environmental analysis to make required findings. Since the complexity of CEQA compliance will vary depending on the proposed project activities and the type of applicant, it is very important that applicants consult with SNC staff as early as possible to discuss which documents may be required in a full application. Status of CEQA compliance and identification of the Lead Agency must be addressed in the project proposal.

**NOTE:** When projects have previously completed CEQA/NEPA documentation and the baseline environmental conditions of the project area have significantly changed (due to fire, tree mortality, etc.), applicants must provide confirmation from the lead agency responsible for preparing the original CEQA/NEPA documents that the documents remain valid.

## Eligible Costs

### DIRECT PROJECT COSTS

For project costs to be eligible for reimbursement, the costs must be within the scope of the project, supported by appropriate documentation, and completed by the required deadline as identified in the grant agreement. Costs related to project-specific performance measures project reporting and required signage are eligible costs, and if being requested by the applicant, must be included in the project budget.

### ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS

Administrative costs are shared overhead expenses, rather than direct costs, and may not exceed 15 percent of the SNC-funded direct project costs. In the event of an audit, projects with budgets that include administrative costs must be able to document the appropriateness of these expenses. A typical method for documentation of administrative overhead expenses is a Cost Allocation Plan (CAP). A CAP is a formal accounting plan used to calculate and document the method for recovering overhead

costs. SNC strongly recommends that grantees consult with an accounting professional to develop an appropriate method for calculating overhead rate and prepare a CAP.

## Ineligible Costs

Examples of ineligible costs include, but are not limited to:

- Establishing or increasing a legal defense fund or endowment
- Monetary donations to other organizations
- Food or refreshments
- Costs associated with fund raising
- Grant writing expenses
- Any expenses incurred before a grant agreement is executed or after the project completion deadline, as identified in the grant agreement

**NOTE:** If an application contains ineligible costs, SNC will remove those costs from the budget and notify the applicant of the change in advance of consideration by the SNC Board.

## Performance Measures and Reporting

Performance measures are used to track progress toward project goals and desired outcomes. They provide a means of reliably measuring and reporting the outcomes and effectiveness of a project and how it contributes to the SNC achieving its programmatic goals. Applicants must propose project-specific performance measures at the time of complete application submittal. Detailed information and recommended performance measures can be found [here](#).

- SNC requires all grantees consider four specific quantitative performance measures:
  1. Number and Type of Jobs Created
  2. Number and Value of New, Improved, or Preserved Economic Activities
  3. Number of People Reached
  4. Resources Leveraged for the Sierra Nevada
- In addition, each grantee will be required to report on one to three additional project-specific performance measures that will help describe project outcomes in a measurable way. Examples of additional performance measures can be found [here](#).
- Applicants may also propose alternative performance measures, which will be subject to the approval of SNC staff if the grant is authorized. The proposed measures will be finalized in consultation with SNC staff prior to grant agreement approval.

- All grantees will be required to provide periodic progress reports (each covers six months of the project) and a final report for the entire project. The final report must include data associated with the project performance measures. See <http://www.sierranevada.ca.gov/other-assistance/managing-your-grant> for additional information on the required content of these reports.

## Evaluation Process and Criteria

All grant applications will be reviewed for completeness and eligibility following submission. Any application determined by SNC to be incomplete and/or ineligible will not be considered for funding.

After a submitted application is determined to be complete and eligible, the SNC will use the following evaluation process to assess a project score of up to 100 points.

- All applications will be reviewed by a technical expert.
- All applications will be shared with appropriate county/city planning, water agency (if applicable), and tribal representatives, as well as SNC's Boardmember county liaisons. If there are any privacy concerns related to information in an application, please discuss them with SNC staff before submission.
- The Evaluation Team will score the applications based on the evaluation criteria described in the following sections.
- Applications scoring 80 or more points may be eligible for a recommendation for award.
- After the evaluation process is complete, including all due diligence and analysis by SNC, funding recommendation(s) will be placed on a future Board meeting agenda at the discretion of SNC's Executive Officer.

**NOTE:** The SNC will consider the geographic distribution of projects, project locations related to disadvantaged communities, and project types and may prioritize projects based on these considerations.

### Evaluation Criteria for Category One Projects:

**NOTE:** Applicants must refer to the online application for detailed guidance on applying the evaluation criteria in the application narrative.

- 1. Natural Resource Benefits** – The degree to which the project improves forest and watershed health and results in multiple, tangible benefits. Clearly identify and explain the need for the specific project and natural resources benefits expected as outcomes. Be sure to reference direct connections to the following:

a) Connection to the following purposes of Proposition 1 and Proposition 68 (up to 15 pts)

- Implement fuel treatment projects to reduce wildfire risks, protect watersheds tributary to water storage facilities, and promote watershed health.
- Protect and restore rural and urban watershed health to improve watershed storage capacity, forest health, protection of life and property, and greenhouse gas reduction.
- Implement watershed adaptation projects in order to reduce the impacts of climate changes on California's communities and ecosystems.

b) Connection to State Planning Priorities previously addressed in these Guidelines, including the [Human Right to Water](#), the [California Water Action Plan](#) and [2016 California Water Plan Update](#), the [2012 Bioenergy Action Plan](#), [Safeguarding California](#), and whether and how the project will benefit disadvantaged communities (up to 10 pts)

c) Connection to the [Sierra Nevada Watershed Improvement Program](#) and [SNC Strategic Plan](#) (up to 15 pts)

- 2. Project Design** – Description of the project purpose, goals, deliverables, treatment approach, and budget. Is the project design supported by science and proven methodologies or the use of new or innovative technology or practices? Is the budget reasonable and well-supported? Are the proposed deliverables appropriate for the project? (up to 10 pts)
- 3. Project Readiness** – Is the project ready to proceed if funded? Is project planning complete? Is all necessary funding in place? Is required permitting in place? (up to 10 pts)
- 4. Long-Term Management** – Is a plan, funding, and the responsible entity in place for carrying out long-term management? How will the outcomes of this project be sustained beyond the life of the grant? (up to 5 pts)
- 5. Likelihood of Success** – Do the applicant and project partner(s) have sufficient capacity and a successful track record implementing similar projects? (up to 10 pts)
- 6. Community Support** – Was the project developed as part of collaborative? Is there clear and demonstrable community outreach and support for the project and any community economic benefits? Is there evidence of tribal support and potential tribal participation in the project? (up to 8 pts)
- 7. Landscape Level Restoration** – Is the project part of a larger plan? Does the project support a broader, cumulative effort to restore/protect forest and watershed health? Has an effort been made to engage other landowners in the area? (up to 10 pts)

8. **Leveraging** – To what degree does the project leverage non-monetary and/or funding resources of agencies and organizations other than SNC? (up to 5 pts)
9. **Downstream Beneficiaries** – What evidence is present that downstream beneficiaries support or are actively participating in the project? (up to 2 pts)

Evaluation Criteria for Category Two Projects:

**NOTE:** Applicants must refer to the online application for detailed guidance on applying the evaluation criteria in the application narrative.

**NOTE:** Applicants should describe both the specific Category Two project that is being proposed and the specific, future on-the-ground project(s) that will be accomplished as a result of the Category Two project. The Evaluation Team will consider both when scoring.

1. **Natural Resource Benefits** – The degree to which the project, and the specific future on-the-ground project(s), will improve forest and watershed health and result in multiple, tangible benefits. Clearly identify and explain the need for the project and specific natural resource benefits expected as outcomes of the future on-the-ground project(s). Be sure to reference direct connections to the following:
  - a) Connection to the following purposes of Proposition 1 and Proposition 68 (up to 15 pts)
    - Implement fuel treatment projects to reduce wildfire risks, protect watersheds tributary to water storage facilities, and promote watershed health.
    - Protect and restore rural and urban watershed health to improve watershed storage capacity, forest health, protection of life and property, and greenhouse gas reduction.
    - Implement watershed adaptation projects in order to reduce the impacts of climate changes on California's communities and ecosystems.
  - b) Connection to State Planning Priorities previously addressed in these Guidelines, including the [Human Right to Water](#), the [California Water Action Plan](#) and [2016 California Water Plan Update](#), the [2012 Bioenergy Action Plan](#), [Safeguarding California](#), and whether and how the project will benefit disadvantaged communities (up to 10 pts)
  - c) Connection to the [Sierra Nevada Watershed Improvement Program](#) and [SNC Strategic Plan](#) (up to 15 pts)
2. **Project Design** – Description of the project purpose, goals, deliverables, and budget. Is the proposal the best approach for reaching the desired outcome? Is the budget reasonable and well-supported? Are the proposed deliverables appropriate for the project? Will the proposed project prepare all needed

planning elements for the future Category One project? Will the design of the future Category One project be supported by science and proven methodologies or the use of new or innovative technology or practices? (up to 10 pts)

3. **Project Readiness** – Is the Category Two project ready to proceed if funded? Is all necessary project planning and coordination complete? Has the source of funds to implement the future Category One project been identified/secured? Are property owners supportive of the project? (up to 10 pts)
4. **Long-Term Management** – Extent to which the applicant has addressed and identified long-term management of the future implementation project? (up to 5 pts)
5. **Likelihood of Success** – Do the applicant and any identified project partner(s) have sufficient capacity and a successful track record implementing similar projects (for both the Category Two and future Category One project)? (up to 10 pts)
6. **Community Support** – Was the project developed as part of collaborative? Is there clear and demonstrable community outreach and support? Is there evidence of tribal support or tribal participation? (up to 8 pts)
7. **Landscape Level Restoration** – Does the proposed project support work that is part of a larger plan? Will the future Category One project support a broader, cumulative effort to restore/protect forest and watershed health? (up to 10 pts)
8. **Leveraging** – To what degree does the project leverage resources of other agencies and organizations, including funding source(s) other than SNC? (up to 5 pts)
9. **Downstream Beneficiaries** – Is there evidence that downstream beneficiaries support or are actively participating in the project and committed or likely to support the future Category One project? (up to 2 pts)

## Consultation and Cooperation with Local Agencies

In compliance with the SNC's governing statute, local government agencies, such as counties, cities, and local water districts, are notified of eligible grant projects being considered for funding in their area. Applicants are required to submit contact information for these local agencies/districts.

For all applications under consideration, SNC staff will notify the county and/or city affected and public water agency (when appropriate), and request comments within 15 business days following notification. The SNC will make all reasonable efforts to address concerns raised by local governments. The individual SNC Boardmembers representing each geographic Subregion within the SNC boundary will also be notified of the project applications in their respective Subregions.

If there are any privacy concerns related to information contained in an application, please notify SNC staff before submission.

## Tribal Consultation

On September 19, 2011, Governor Brown issued Executive Order B-10-11, which provides, among other things, that it is the policy of the administration that every state agency and department subject to executive control implement effective government-to-government consultation with California Native American tribes. SNC staff will work to implement all aspects of the Tribal Consultation Policy when evaluating project applications.

## Grant Awards and Agreements

For each awarded grant, the SNC develops an individual grant agreement with detailed provisions and requirements specific to that project. Please be aware that if an entity is awarded a grant from the SNC, the provisions listed below will also apply:

- Actual awards are conditional upon passage of the California budget and funds being available for the SNC Grant Program.
- Administrative costs are limited to no more than 15 percent of the actual direct project costs.
- Grant-eligible costs may be incurred by the grantee only after the grantee has entered into a fully executed agreement with the SNC.
- To the extent practicable, Category One projects will be required to include onsite signage indicating that the project was funded by the Sierra Nevada Conservancy using Proposition 1 or Proposition 68 funds. The required acknowledgement language is included in the grant agreement and logo graphics are available on the SNC website. Reasonable costs associated with creation and installation of the sign are eligible expenses and should be included in the project budget.

The SNC will provide assistance to the grantee to ensure the grantee's clear understanding and interpretation of the terms and conditions of the grant.

### III. ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

Act	Laird-Leslie Sierra Nevada Conservancy Act
CAL FIRE	California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection
CALCC	California Association of Local Conservation Corps
CAP	Cost Allocation Plan
CCC	California Conservation Corps
CDFW	California Department of Fish and Wildlife
CEQA	California Environmental Quality Act
CWAP	California Water Action Plan
CWC	California Water Code
DOC	Department of Conservation
DWR	Department of Water Resources
GG	Grant Guidelines
GHG	Greenhouse Gas
HRTW	Human Right to Water
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
PRC	Public Resources Code
RPF	Registered Professional Forester
SNC	Sierra Nevada Conservancy
SWRCB	State Water Resources Control Board
USFS	United States Forest Service
WIP	Sierra Nevada Watershed Improvement Program

## IV. GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Unless otherwise stated, the terms used in the SNC Proposition 1 and Proposition 68 Grant Guidelines shall have the following meanings:

Acquisition – To obtain fee title ownership of real property. Leaseholds and rentals do not constitute acquisition.

Administrative Costs – Administrative costs include any expense which is not directly related to project implementation. Similar to the traditional definition of ‘overhead,’ administrative costs include shared costs, such as rent, utilities, travel, per diem, office equipment, services such as internet and phone, shared bookkeeping costs, etc.

Applicant – The entity applying for a SNC grant pursuant to these Guidelines.

Application – The individual grant application form and its required attachments pursuant to the SNC Grant Program.

Authorized Representative – The officer authorized in the Resolution to sign all required grant documents including, but not limited to, the grant agreement, the application form, and payment requests.

Biological/Other Survey – An evaluation or collection of data regarding the conditions in an area using surveys and other direct measurements.

Board – The governing body of the SNC as established by PRC Section 33321.

Bond or Bond Act – Proposition 1, Water Quality, Supply, and Infrastructure Improvement Act of 2014 (Public Resources Code Section 79700 et seq.).

Capital Improvement Projects – Projects that utilize grant funds for site improvement and/or restoration.

CEQA – The California Environmental Quality Act as set forth in the Public Resources Code Section 21000 et seq. CEQA is a law establishing policies and procedures that require agencies to identify, disclose to decision makers and the public, and attempt to lessen significant impacts to environmental and historical resources that may occur as a result of a proposed project to be undertaken, funded, or approved by a local or state agency. For more information, [click here](#).

CEQA/NEPA Compliance – Activities an entity performs to meet the requirements of CEQA and/or NEPA.

Collaborative Process – Cooperation between stakeholders with different interests to solve a problem or make decisions that cut across jurisdictional or other boundaries; often used when information is widely dispersed and no single individual, agency, or group has sufficient resources to address the issue alone.

Condition Assessment – Characterization of the current state or condition of a particular resource.

Conservancy – The Sierra Nevada Conservancy as defined in Public Resources Code Section 33302 (b).

Data – A body or collection of facts, statistics, or other items of information from which conclusions can be drawn.

Design – Preliminary project planning or identification of methodologies or processes to achieve project goals.

Eligible Costs – Expenses incurred by the grantee during the performance period of an approved agreement, which may be reimbursed by the SNC.

Enhancement – Modification of a site to increase/improve the condition of streams, forests, habitat, and other resources.

Environmental Site Assessment – Phase I, Phase II, or other reports which identify potential or existing contamination liabilities on the underlying land or physical improvements of a real estate holding.

Executive Officer – Executive Officer of the SNC appointed by the Governing Board, pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 33328, to manage the SNC.

Fee Title – The primary interest in land ownership that entitles the owner to use the property subject to any lesser interests in the land and consistent with applicable laws and ordinances.

Fiscal Sponsor – An organization that is eligible to receive SNC Proposition 1 grants and is willing to assume fiscal responsibility for a grant project, although another entity would carry out the grant scope of work.

Forests – For the purposes of these Guidelines, forests are defined as areas of the Sierra Nevada Region that are characterized by predominantly conifer and mixed-conifer forests.

Forest Health – A healthy forest is a forest that possesses the ability to sustain the unique species composition and processes that exist within it. Forest Health occurs when resilience, recurrence, persistence, and biophysical processes lead to sustainable ecological conditions.

Grant – Funds made available to a grantee for eligible costs during an agreement term.

Grant Agreement – An agreement between the SNC and the grantee specifying the payment of funds by the SNC for the performance of the project scope according to the terms of the agreement by the grantee.

Grantee – An entity that has an agreement with the SNC for grant funds.

Grant Scope – Description of the items of work to be completed with grant funds as described in the application form and cost estimate.

In-kind Contributions – Non-monetary donations that are utilized on the project, including materials and services. These donations shall be eligible as “other sources of funds” when providing budgetary information for application purposes.

Land Tenure – Legal ownership or other rights in land, sufficient to allow a grantee to conduct activities that are necessary for completion of the project consistent with the terms and conditions of the grant agreement. Examples include fee title ownership, an easement for completion of the project consistent with the terms and conditions of the grant agreement, or agreements or a clearly defined process where the applicant has adequate site control for the purposes of the project.

Model/Map – Representations to visually show the organization, appearance, or features of an area or subject.

Multibenefit – For the purposes of these Guidelines, Multibenefit pertaining to Forest Health may include, but are not limited to: reduction in wildfire risk, improved air quality, improved water quality and quantity, increased carbon sequestration and biomass utilization. Multibenefits pertaining to SNC mission and program areas, the SNC Strategic Plan, and WIP may include, but are not limited to, increased economic resilience, increased or enhanced use of public lands, increased or enhanced recreational benefits

NEPA – The National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended. NEPA is a federal law requiring consideration of the potential environmental effects of a proposed project whenever a federal agency has discretionary jurisdiction over some aspect of that project. For more information, refer to: <https://ceq.doe.gov/>

Nonprofit Organization – A private, nonprofit organization that qualifies for exempt status under Section 501(c)(3) of Title 26 of the United States Code, and whose charitable purposes are consistent with the purposes of the SNC as set forth in Public Resources Code Section 33300 et seq.

Other Sources of Funds – Cash or in-kind contributions necessary or used to complete the site improvement/restoration project beyond the grant funds provided by this program.

Outreach Materials – Audio, visual, and written materials developed to help explain a particular topic or subject.

Performance Measure – A quantitative measure used by the SNC to track progress toward project goals and desired outcomes.

Permitting – The process of obtaining any necessary regulatory approvals from appropriate governmental agencies in order to implement the project.

Plan – A document or process describing a set of actions to address specific needs or issues, or create specific benefits.

Pre-Project Due Diligence – The analysis necessary to prepare a future on-the-ground project for implementation.

Preservation – Protection, rehabilitation, stabilization, restoration, development, and reconstruction, or any combination of those activities.

Project – The work to be accomplished with grant funds.

Proposition 1 – The Water Quality, Supply, and Infrastructure Improvement Bond Act of 2014. Proposition 1 added Section 79731 to the California Water Code (CWC), authorizing the state to issue bonds, and the Legislature to appropriate the proceeds, for multibenefit water quality, water supply, and watershed protection and restoration projects for the watersheds of the state.

Proposition 68 – The California Drought, Water, Parks, Climate, Coastal Protection, and Outdoor Access For All Act of 2018 which authorizes the issuance of bonds to finance a drought, water, parks, climate, coastal protection, and outdoor access for all program.

Public Agencies – Any city, county, district, joint powers authority, or state agency.

Region – The Sierra Nevada Region as defined in PRC Section 33302 (f).

Resilience – The ability of an ecosystem to regain structural and functional attributes that have suffered harm from stress or disturbance.

Region-wide – The overall breadth of the SNC Region or multiple Subregions within the Region.

Resource Protection – Those actions necessary to prevent harm or damage to natural, cultural, historical or archaeological resources, or those actions necessary to allow the continued use and enjoyment of property or resources, such as restoration, preservation or interpretation.

Restoration – Activities that initiate, accelerate or return the components and processes of a damaged site to a previous historical state.

Site Improvements – Project activities involving the physical improvement or restoration of land.

SNC – Sierra Nevada Conservancy.

Study/Report – Research or the detailed examination and analysis of a subject.

Total Cost – The amount of the Other Sources of Funds combined with the SNC Grant request amount that is designated and necessary for the completion of a project

Tribal Entities – Includes any Indian tribe, band, nation, or other organized group or community, or a tribal agency authorized by a tribe, which is recognized as eligible for special programs and services provided by the United States to Indians because of their status as Indians and is identified in Number 19 of Volume 81, pages 5019-5025 (January 29, 2016) of the Federal Register, as that list may be updated or amended from time to time.