



FOREST AND WATERSHED HEALTH GRANT GUIDELINES

Directed Grant Program

**Fiscal Years
2020-2021 and 2021-2022**



**Sierra Nevada Watershed
Improvement Program**

**Funded by Proposition 68
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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I. INTRODUCTION

Background

The mission of the Sierra Nevada Conservancy is to initiate, encourage, and support efforts that improve the environmental, economic, and social well-being of the Sierra Nevada Region, its communities, and the citizens of California. SNC's Strategic Plan identifies a Healthy Watersheds and Forests Regional Goal. This Goal continues the SNC's priority focus on healthy forests and broadens efforts to better integrate watershed elements into its programs, reinforcing the SNC's commitment to preserve, protect, and restore the health of the Region's watersheds, regardless of the threats they face.

The bipartisan [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 statute that created the SNC emphasizes the importance of carrying out the mission in an integrated and complementary manner and the important role an organization providing strategic direction and resources to the Region can play. The SNC's activities fall under seven statutorily mandated program areas:

- 1) Increasing the opportunity for tourism and recreation in the Region
- 2) Protecting, conserving, and restoring the Region's physical, cultural, archaeological, historical, and living resources
- 3) Aiding in the preservation of working landscapes
- 4) Reducing the risk of natural disasters such as wildfire
- 5) Protecting and improving water and air quality
- 6) Assisting the Regional economy through the operation of the SNC's programs
- 7) Enhancing public use and enjoyment of lands owned by the public

The [SNC Strategic Plan](#) (Plan) is developed in accordance with the Act and provides direction for SNC activities and grant programs. The Plan implements the Sierra Nevada Watershed Improvement Program (WIP). The 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 in a manner which recognizes the inherent interrelationships and dependencies between the Regional Goals in the Strategic Plan. The Plan identifies five Regional Goals:

1) Healthy Watersheds and Forests

2) Resilient Sierra Nevada
Communities

3) Vibrant Recreation and Tourism

4) Strategic Lands Conserved

5) Impactful Regional Identity

The Healthy Watersheds and Forests regional goal focuses on efforts to restore and protect the ecological health and resilience of watersheds and forests within the Sierra Nevada Region. Healthy watersheds are essential to maintain a long-term stable supply of high-quality water. Forested watersheds of the Sierra Nevada 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.

Related State Priorities

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](#) (CWAP) and subsequent updates, developed by the California Natural Resources Agency, Environmental Protection Agency, and California Department of Food and Agriculture, clearly recognize the importance of the Sierra to the state's water resources and specifically calls for restoration of forest health through ecologically sound forest management. This Plan also 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

The California Natural Resources Agency's [Safeguarding California Plan: 2018 Update](#) identifies strategies for adaptation and risk management relating to climate change. The 2018 Update 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."

The [2018 California Forest Carbon Plan](#) describes recommended actions to achieve healthy and resilient forests as a long-term carbon sink in light of climate change in California. The Forest Carbon Plan is aimed at significantly increasing the pace and scale of forest and watershed improvements, as current rates of fuel reduction, thinning of overly dense forests, and use of prescribed and managed fire are far below levels needed to restore forest health, prevent extreme fires, and meet the state's long-term climate goals.

Limited infrastructure, workforce, and management capacity are identified as major impediments to forest restoration and ongoing forest management.

Program Funding

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 Division 45 to the Public Resources Code, authorizing the state to issue bonds, and the Legislature to appropriate the proceeds, for purposes identified in the Act. Proposition 68 recognizes the critical importance of recreation and tourism to California's economy and ecology, and specifically directs funds to be used to support and expand recreation economies, opportunities, and access to outdoor recreation.

Section 80110(9) allocates \$30 million of these funds to SNC for purposes specified by its governing statute. It is the intent of the people of California that these funds will be invested in projects that:

- Advance the purposes of SNC as identified in its governing statute and Strategic Plan (§80110[9]);
- Provide public benefits that address the most critical statewide needs and priorities (§80001[b][1]);
- Leverage private, federal, or local funding or produce the greatest public benefit (§80001[b][2]);
- To the extent practicable, provide workforce training, contractor, and job opportunities for disadvantaged communities (§80001[b][5]); and
- To the extent practicable, measure greenhouse gas emissions reductions and carbon sequestrations associated with projects (§80001[b][7]);

Additionally, Proposition 68 states that:

- At least 20 percent of the funds available pursuant to Chapter 8 shall be allocated to projects serving severely disadvantaged communities (SDAC). (§80008[a][1]); and
- To the extent permissible under State General Obligation Bond Law and with the concurrence of the Director of Finance, up to five percent of funds available through Proposition 68 may be available for community access projects. (§80008[c]). Proposition 68 defines community access as engagement programs, technical assistance, or facilities that maximize safe and equitable physical

admittance, especially for low-income communities, to natural or cultural resources, community education, or recreational amenities.

Additional Funding Sources

If additional funding sources become available, with purposes consistent with SNC's Strategic Plan and the Forest and Watershed Health Directed Grants Program as described in these Guidelines, SNC may allocate those funding sources to the support of this grant program.

Project requirements or limitations tied to specific funding sources or state budget allocations will be included in project selection criteria and grant agreements.

Program Priorities

Healthy and resilient forests are a primary goal identified in a variety of SNC plans and programs. The Forest and Watershed Health Directed Grants Program aims to support projects that create or improve forest conditions that result in a combination of multiple watershed, ecosystem, and community benefits. Examples of such 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, increased carbon sequestration and reduced GHG (Greenhouse Gas) emissions, supporting regional economies, and building the capacity of local communities and collaboratives.

The specific focus areas of the Forest and Watershed Health Directed Grants Program for Fiscal Years 2020 - 2022 are outlined below. Projects must fall within one of the focus areas to be considered for funding.

- 1) **Implementation of prescribed fire** to improve watershed health. Project tasks may include pre-burning treatment and site preparation but must also implement prescribed fire on the landscape. Projects that include only planning for prescribed fire or conduct pre-burning site treatments will not be eligible for funding.
- 2) **Large-landscape planning** projects for forest health which demonstrate multiple watershed and ecosystem benefits. These projects must complete project planning on a minimum of 10,000 acres. At the close of the planning project, all environmental compliance must be complete. As available SNC funds will likely not cover the total cost of a large-landscape plan, these projects should be a partnership effort, with SNC funds leveraging funding from other sources to complete the plans.
- 3) **Implementation of forest health planning projects** for which SNC previously funded the planning phase.
- 4) Projects that connect and serve **underserved partners**. Strategic partners that

have received no more than one SNC grant since the start of the WIP Forest Health Program (in FY 2015-2016 with funding from Proposition 1) will be eligible for grants to support planning or implementation of multi-benefit forest and watershed health projects. Examples of such projects include, but are not limited to, fuel treatments to reduce the risk of severe wildfire for community or watershed protection; restoration, reforestation, or stand improvement activities after wildfire; forest management work, including the reduction of ladder fuels and canopy cover that will result in increased forest resilience; and forest treatment projects that prevent and/or address the impacts of severe tree mortality.

II. 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
- 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: an Indian tribe, band, nation, or other organized group or community, or a tribal agency authorized by a tribe, which is one or both of the following: (1) Recognized by the United States and identified within the most current Federal Register; (2) Listed on the contact list maintained by the Native American Heritage Commission as a California Native American tribe.

NOTE: SNC's governing statute does not allow grants to mutual water companies.

Project Eligibility

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
- Meet one of the four focus areas described in the Program Priorities section of these guidelines:
 - Implementation of prescribed fire
 - Large-landscape planning
 - Implementation of SNC planning projects
 - Underserved partners
- Be consistent with the SNC mission and program areas as defined in the [SNC Strategic Plan](#)
- Meet the forest and watershed health requirements of [Proposition 68](#)
- Be consistent with recommendations of the [2018 California Forest Carbon Plan](#)
- Result in a clear, demonstrable, and enduring public benefit

Consistent with provisions of Proposition 68 and objectives of the proposed project, the SNC may give favorable consideration to projects which:

- involve California Native American tribes
- employ a collaborative approach in project development or implementation
- directly benefit severely disadvantaged or disadvantaged communities
- leverage private, federal, or local resources
- enable the equitable geographic distribution of SNC resources

Project Categories

Projects are categorized as either Category One on-the-ground implementation projects or Category Two planning efforts that will lead to a specific, future on-the-ground project(s). Consistent with the requirements of Proposition 68, all projects must either plan for or implement capital improvement projects that will benefit California citizens for no less than 30 years.

Category One Projects

Category One projects are on-the-ground implementation projects. 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.
- 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.

Category Two Projects

Category Two projects are limited to planning and other pre-implementation activities that result in a ready-to-implement future on-the-ground project(s). The future project(s) should

be clearly identified in the proposal. Please note that under the current Program Priorities, Category Two projects would only be eligible within the large-landscape planning and underserved partners focus areas.

Examples of potential 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)

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.
- 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
- Any projects that do not meet the Program Priorities described 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 [SNC Area Representatives](#).

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; they must be included in the project budget if being requested by the applicant.

Costs for travel and lodging directly related to the project are eligible but may not exceed the current state lodging and mileage reimbursement rates. Food and entertainment are not eligible expenses under this program. Please note that travel and related costs as part of a subcontract for project implementation are not subject to these limitations.

Administrative Costs

Administrative costs are shared overhead expenses rather than direct costs.

Administrative costs 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 not part of a negotiated subcontract related to project implementation.
- Costs associated with fundraising
- Grant writing expenses
- Any expenses incurred before a grant agreement is executed or after the project completion deadline, as identified in the grant agreement

III. PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

Right of Access for Project Implementation

For any projects which involve planning for or implementation of on-the-ground site improvement activities, proposals must include a letter from all property owners/managers indicating their awareness of and willingness to implement the project and granting access to the property to conduct pre-project due diligence or other necessary activities. If the grantee does not own the property on which the project is implemented, before a grant agreement is executed the grantee must enter into an agreement with the landowner assuring ten years of access for project implementation and maintenance.

Disadvantaged Communities

All projects must describe if and how the project may directly benefit disadvantaged or severely disadvantaged communities. Please visit the California State Parks website for a [map of community designations](https://www.parksforcalifornia.org/communities) (<https://www.parksforcalifornia.org/communities>).

Environmental Compliance Documents

The SNC requires all projects comply with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) at the time the Board authorizes a grant. 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 CEQA documents will be required. If CEQA is complete at the time of proposal, the Lead Agency for CEQA must be identified in the proposal, with a letter of support or other documentation from the Agency stating that they are eligible and willing to serve as Lead. In cases where a project is not exempt from CEQA and the partners do not have standing to act as Lead Agency, the SNC will consider acting as Lead Agency.

If the project is subject to National Environmental Policy Act, it must be in compliance at the time the Board authorizes a grant.

NOTE: When projects have previously completed CEQA or 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 agency responsible for preparing the original environmental compliance documents that the analysis and determinations remain valid.

Long-Term Management

Projects receiving support through this program must demonstrate a clear and enduring public benefit. This includes long term viability of any programs developed through the

project as well as on-the-ground site improvement components of a project. All site improvement project sites 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. The long-term management plan for site improvement or program development projects must include a description of how project deliverables will be managed and maintained over time, by whom, and how funding will be provided for such work.

Long-Term Monitoring

On-the-ground site improvement projects shall 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 grantee does not own the property on which the project is implemented, before a grant agreement is executed the grantee must enter into an agreement with the landowner assuring this monitoring access.

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. Grantees will not be required to make these calculations for each project, but instead submit base information (such as acres, land type, activities) for CNRA use. This requirement will only apply when feasible for a project.

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. Detailed information and recommended performance measures can be found on the [SNC Performance Measures](#) webpage.

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) Resources Leveraged for the Sierra Nevada
- 4) Number of People Reached

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 on the [SNC Performance Measures](#) webpage.

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 six-month progress reports and a final report for the entire project timeline. The final report must include data associated with the project performance measures.

Engagement with California Native American Tribes

The SNC strongly encourages engagement with Native American tribes as early as possible in the development, planning, and implementation of projects. SNC staff can assist project proponents with identifying Native American tribes whose ancestral homelands may be in the project area and help provide contact information for those tribes. The SNC will notify the appropriate tribal contacts regarding all eligible grant projects being considered for funding in their area. SNC may prioritize projects in which tribal communities are involved.

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.

For all proposals under consideration, SNC staff will notify the county and/or city and public water agency affected (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.

If there are privacy concerns related to information contained in a proposal, please notify SNC staff before submission.

California Conservation Corps and California Association of Local Conservation Corps

Per Proposition 68 requirements, all projects that involve an on-the-ground site improvement component shall consult with representatives of both the [California Conservation Corps \(CCC\)](mailto:Prop68@ccc.ca.gov) (Prop68@ccc.ca.gov), and [California Association of Local Conservation Corps \(CALCC\)](mailto:inquiry@prop68communitycorps.org) (inquiry@prop68communitycorps.org) to determine the feasibility of Corps participation. Projects that do not include a site improvement component do not need to notify the Corps. Please review the [guidance on the CCC website](https://ccc.ca.gov/what-we-do/funding-opportunities/proposition-68-parks-water-bond/) (https://ccc.ca.gov/what-we-do/funding-opportunities/proposition-68-parks-water-bond/) which describes the consultation process. The process takes ten business days to complete after an email submission of project details. Please consult with your [SNC Area](#)

[Representative](#) to learn more details regarding the use of CCC for implementation of the project.

Additional Requirements

Any additional requirements or restrictions, including those specific to additional funding sources or new state budget requirements, will be included on the SNC website program description.

IV. PROGRAM PROCESS

Proposal Development

As the Forest and Watershed Health program is a directed grant program, proposals are developed in conjunction with SNC. To initiate consideration of a project, an applicant should contact the appropriate [SNC Area Representative](#) or other SNC staff. The Area Representative will assist the applicant organizer to determine if the project meets SNC criteria. If it is determined that SNC will consider partnering on the project, the Area Representative will share the SNC Forest Health Concept Proposal Form with the applicant and assist in developing the project. Upon review of a Concept Proposal, applicants may be directed to develop a full Proposal in conjunction with SNC staff.

Schedule

Proposals are accepted on a continuous basis and will be considered on a quarterly cycle, starting July 2020.

- 1) July 2020: Program announcement in July 2020
- 2) September 2020: Review of Concept Proposals and direction given to develop full Proposals
- 3) November 2020: Review of full Proposals and decisions regarding continued due diligence activities and potential recommendations to the SNC Governing Board
- 4) March 2021: If due diligence is complete, recommended to the SNC Governing Board for grant award

The cycle will repeat every quarter.

Evaluation Process

The SNC will work closely with applicants in the development of the project and project proposal. As such, project evaluation will not come after submission of a proposal, but instead will occur upon initial discussion and throughout the project development process. The following evaluation aspects will be considerations in project development:

- 1) The project and its proposal will be reviewed by a technical expert for technical merit.
- 2) The project and its proposal will be reviewed by an environmental compliance expert.
- 3) Proposals will be shared with appropriate county/city planning, water agency, and tribal representatives. If there are any privacy concerns related to information in a proposal, please discuss them with SNC staff before submission.

- 4) An SNC Evaluation Team will independently review and meet to discuss the proposals based on the evaluation criteria described in the following section.
- 5) The Evaluation Team will prepare a recommendation for SNC's Executive Team.
- 6) 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, tribal involvement, project locations related to disadvantaged communities, and project types when considering recommendations to the Board.

Evaluation Criteria

Project proposals will not move forward with recommendation to SNC's Executive Team until the following criteria have been addressed to the satisfaction of SNC and the project proponent:

1) **Alignment with funding and program goals and related state priorities**

The degree to which a project aligns with:

a. Grant Program Priorities

One of the following focus areas must be met:

- i. Implementation of Prescribed Fire
- ii. Large-Landscape Planning
- iii. Implementation of SNC Planning Projects
- iv. Underserved Partners

b. The [SNC Strategic Plan](#)

c. [Proposition 68](#) or other funding source.

d. State Planning Priorities previously addressed in these Guidelines, including the [California Water Action Plan](#), [Safeguarding California Plan: 2018 Update](#) and the [2018 California Forest Carbon Plan](#).

e. Other local, Regional, state, or federal plans.

2) **Natural Resource and Public Benefits**

The degree to which the project improves forest and watershed health and results in multiple, tangible benefits. The need for the specific project and the natural resources benefits expected as outcomes.

3) **Project Design and Budget**

Clarity on the project purpose, goals, deliverables, treatment approach, schedule and budget. Is the project design supported by science and proven methodologies or the use of new or innovative technology or practices? Are the proposed

deliverables appropriate for the project? Is the budget adequate and reasonable to implement the project, with costs clearly defined and supported?

4) **Project Readiness**

The degree to which the project is ready to proceed promptly if funded. Is project planning and coordination complete? Is access secured, environmental compliance, permitting, or other necessary preparations complete as appropriate? Is all funding identified or secured?

5) **Long-Term Management**

Is a plan, funding, and the responsible entity in place for carrying out long-term management? How will public benefits be sustained?

6) **Likelihood of Success**

Does the project organizer have the necessary experience and sufficient capacity to implement the project as described?

7) **Community Support and Collaboration**

The degree to which the project has public and institutional support at the local, Regional, or larger scale and the local community or other stakeholders are engaged in project planning or delivery. 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 tribal support for, or tribal participation in, the project?

8) **Landscape-Level Context**

The degree to which the proposed project is part of a larger plan, coordinated effort, or is proximate to public lands or recreational amenities. Does the project support a broader, cumulative effort to restore/protect strategic goals?

9) **Leveraging**

The degree to which a project provides in-kind services and/or secured federal, state, private, or local cost share funding. Have non-monetary and/or funding resources of agencies and organizations other than SNC been identified and secured?

10) **Downstream Beneficiaries**

Is there evidence that downstream beneficiaries support or are actively participating in the project?

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 apply.

- 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.
- All grantees will be required to provide six-month progress reports and a final report for the entire project timeline.
- To the extent practicable, site improvement projects will be required to include onsite signage indicating that the project was funded by the Sierra Nevada Conservancy and the applicable funding source. The required acknowledgement language is included in the grant agreement. 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.

V. ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

Act	Laird-Leslie Sierra Nevada Conservancy Act
CALCC	California Association of Local Conservation Corps
CAP	Cost Allocation Plan
CCC	California Conservation Corps
CEQA	California Environmental Quality Act
CWAP	California Water Action Plan
CWC	California Water Code
DAC	Disadvantaged Community
GHG	Greenhouse Gas
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
Plan	Sierra Nevada Conservancy Strategic Plan
PRC	Public Resources Code
SDAC	Severely Disadvantaged Community
SNC	Sierra Nevada Conservancy
WIP	Sierra Nevada Watershed Improvement Program

VI. GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Unless otherwise stated, the terms used in these 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.

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 68, [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 Division 45 to the Public Resources Code (PRC Division 45).

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 PRC 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.

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.

Community Access – Engagement programs, technical assistance, or facilities that maximize safe and equitable physical admittance, especially for low-income communities, to natural or cultural resources, community education, or recreational amenities.

Concept Proposal – The individual grant pre-application form and its required attachments pursuant to the SNC Grant Program.

Conservancy – The Sierra Nevada Conservancy as defined in PRC 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.

Disadvantaged Community (DAC) – A community with a median household income less than 80 percent of the statewide average. View [maps of DAC areas](http://www.parksforcalifornia.org/communities) (<http://www.parksforcalifornia.org/communities>).

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.

Executive Officer – Executive Officer of the SNC appointed by the Governing Board, pursuant to PRC 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.

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 Carbon Plan – May 2018 California Forest Carbon Plan prepared by the Forest Climate Action Team

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.

NEPA – The National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended. [NEPA](https://ceq.doe.gov/) (<https://ceq.doe.gov/>) 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.

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 PRC 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 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 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.

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

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.

Safeguarding California Plan – 2018 Update of California’s Climate Adaptation Strategy

Severely Disadvantaged Community (SDAC) – A community with a median household income less than 60% of the statewide average. View [maps of SDAC areas](http://www.parksforcalifornia.org/communities) (<http://www.parksforcalifornia.org/communities>).

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 one or both of the following: (1) Recognized by the United States and identified within the most current Federal Register. (2) Listed on the contact list maintained by the Native American Heritage Commission as a California Native American tribe.