



Memo

Date: March 24, 2015

To: Members of the State Coastal Conservancy

From: Sam Schuchat, Executive Officer
Mary Small, Deputy Executive Officer

CC: Oversight Members

RE: Draft Proposition 1 Grant-Program Guidelines

Coastal Conservancy staff presented draft Proposition 1 (“Prop 1”) Grant-Program Guidelines (“Prop 1 Guidelines”) at the January meeting of the Conservancy. The Prop 1 Guidelines explain the process and criteria that the Conservancy will use to solicit applications, evaluate proposals, and award grants, pursuant to Prop 1. These draft Prop 1 Guidelines will be revised based on Conservancy direction and public comment. The Conservancy will be asked to consider adoption of the final Prop 1 Guidelines at its June 25th meeting.

Public Input

The Prop 1 Guidelines were posted on the Conservancy’s website in early February and public comments were accepted until March 23rd. The Conservancy held three public workshops on the grant guidelines: March 11th in Sacramento, March 19th in Oakland, and March 20th in Los Angeles. The March 19th meeting was also a webcast conference call. Eleven people attended the Sacramento hearing, forty people attended the Oakland meeting (including webinar) and twenty-three people attended the meeting in Los Angeles. At each meeting the Conservancy made a brief presentation on the guidelines, answered questions and listened to public comments. The Conservancy received written comments (letters or emails) from fifty six organizations and individuals. A complete set of written comments is available on the Conservancy’s [website](#) and discussed below.

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Public Comments

The Conservancy received extensive and thoughtful comments on the draft guidelines both in written comments and at the three public meetings. A few topics were the focus of the majority of the comments.

Pre-application consultation

Many comments state that working with Coastal Conservancy staff helps applicants develop better projects, especially those applicants working in Disadvantaged Communities. Several people requested a pre-proposal process.

- Recommend that all applicants consult with Conservancy staff prior to submitting an application. Make pre-proposal assistance available to all potential applicants. Do not require written pre-proposals given the workload associated with quarterly solicitations.

Scoring

Several commenters requested that we increase available points for the extent of multiple benefits. Revised scoring table is attached.

- Revise draft point allocation to increase available points for extent of multiple benefits.

Several commenters requested clarification about whether “in-kind” contributions, expenditures for planning or other state funds would count in scoring toward leverage.

- Clarify that planning expenditures can count as leverage. “In-kind” contributions may be counted as leverage if the applicant has adequate documentation of the value of those contributions. State funds may count towards leverage bonus points as a demonstration of agency alignment.

Several commenters requested more specificity in how grant criteria would be scored.

- Provide more detailed description of how criteria will be scored when Requests For Proposals (RFPs) are released.

Clarify Eligible Projects & Eligible Grantees

Many commenters requested clarification about eligibility of specific types of projects, including land conservation, planning and restoration of wetlands on public lands. A few comments requested changes to definitions written into Prop 1.

- Clarify eligible projects to include land conservation, planning and restoration of wetlands on public lands.

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Prop 1 defines public agency as a “state agency or department, special district, joint powers authority, city, county, city and county, or other political subdivision of the state.” Federal agencies are not included in this definition.

- Clarify that eligible public agency grantee do not include federal agencies.

Regional Conservation Plans

Several commenters requested prioritization for projects that advance regional and local plans. The Conservancy was recognized for its work developing science-based regional conservation plans and encouraged to prioritize projects that implement those plans. Comments specifically identified the San Francisco Bay Joint Venture Implementation Plan, the Southern California Wetland Recovery Project Work Plan and the Priority Conservation Areas among others.

- Appendix C will include local and regional science based plans. Revise criteria related to implementing state plans to include local and regional plans.

Disadvantaged Community

Prop 1 defines a disadvantaged community as “a community with an annual median household income that is less than 80 percent of the statewide annual median household income” Water Code § 79702(j) (by reference to § 79505.5 (a), not a provision of Prop 1).

- Change Prop 1 Guidelines to reference this definition rather than the Cal Enviro Screen Maps.

Many commenters stated the importance of providing grants to benefit disadvantaged communities.

- Change proposed scoring so that the benefit to disadvantaged communities counts towards the total score, and not just towards bonus points.

Conservation Corps and Certified Local Conservation Corps

Prop 1 states that restoration and ecosystem protection projects shall use the services of the California Conservation Corps or a certified local conservation corps when feasible. (§ 79734.)

- Require applicants for grants to consult with Conservation Corps and local corps prior to submitting an application for restoration and ecosystem-protection projects. Review in the screening process, and only applications with this consultation will be considered complete.

Specific Priorities

Several commenters requested that priority be given to specific projects, including restoration of wetlands in San Francisco Bay.

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- The Conservancy's priorities are described in the draft Strategic Plan update, including the importance of restoring wetland in San Francisco Bay. Staff does not recommend that the Prop 1 Guidelines prioritize certain types of projects or geographic areas.

Funding Availability

Funding should be allocated based on need and quality of projects, not evenly between solicitations. Some comments requested that the Conservancy spend its Prop 1 funds over 5 years, not 10 years.

- Revise guidelines to make it clear that funding will be awarded based on the quality of proposals (not evenly between solicitations).

Grant Conditions

Several comments related to the requirements of the grant agreement, including reimbursement, allowable overhead costs, etc.

- The Conservancy's grant application form (available online) includes an attachment that describes typical grant requirements. This information will be updated as needed when the Conservancy releases RFPs for Prop 1 funding.

Criteria	Points	New Pts	Change
The extent to which the project achieves one or more of the purposes of Chapter 6 of Prop 1.	20	15	Reduced Points
The extent to which the application includes a complete, reasonable and well thought out proposed scope of work, budget and schedule.	20	15	Reduced Points
The extent to which the project provides multiple benefits.	5	10	Increased points
The extent to which the project benefits a disadvantaged community	0	8	New criteria, moved out of bonus points
The extent to which the project promotes and implements the California Water Action Plan, other state plans and policies, and relevant regional water plans.	8	8	change to include local and regional plans
The extent to which the applicant demonstrates experience successfully implementing similar projects or demonstrates appropriate and necessary partnerships to complete the project.	8	8	
The extent to which the applicant demonstrates that project has community support.	8	8	change to include support for project goals and community engagement
Whether the project is consistent with best available science.	8	8	
The extent to which the project leverages the resources of private, federal or local funding sources. Projects that have at least 25% matching funds will receive 3 points. Projects with greater than 50% matching funds will receive 8 points. Bonus points for projects with greater than 100% matching funds, see below.	8	5	Clarify that projects that have between 25% to 50% matching funds will receive 3 points; projects with greater 50% matching funds will receive 5 points. Bonus points for projects with greater than 100% matching funds, see below.
The extent to which the applicant demonstrates a clear and reasonable method for measuring and reporting the effectiveness of the project.	5	5	
The extent to which the project employs new or innovative technology or practices.	5	5	
The extent to which the project will deliver sustainable outcomes in the long-term.	5	5	
	100	100	
Bonus Points			
Matching funds >100%	5	5	
Enviro Screen Score	15	0	moved to score
Use Corps	5	0	consultation with Corps required to have complete application, no bonus points