

---

**SIERRA NEVADA**  
C O N S E R V A N C Y



# **SIERRA NEVADA CONSERVANCY PROPOSITION 84 GRANTS PROGRAM**

**FUNDED BY THE  
Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River  
and Coastal Protection Bond Act of 2006**

## **GRANTS GUIDELINES** Fiscal Year 2010/11

[www.sierranevada.ca.gov](http://www.sierranevada.ca.gov)

*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.*

---

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>I. Introduction</b>	4
<b>II. General Program Information</b>	7
A. Grant Program Requirements	7
B. Eligible Applicants	7
C. Eligible Projects	8
D. Eligible Costs	8
E. Ineligible Costs	9
F. Grant Provisions	9
G. Performance Measures and Reporting	9
H. Consultation and Cooperation with Local Agencies	10
<b>III. Grant Program Categories</b>	10
<b>IV. Specific Requirements for Category One Grants</b>	12
A. Acquisition Projects	12
B. Site Improvement/Restoration Projects	13
<b>IV. Applying for a Grant</b>	15
A. General Information	15
B. Process	18
<b>V. Category One: Acquisition or Site Improvement/Restoration Grant Proposals Evaluation Criteria</b>	18
A. Project Quality and Readiness (Maximum of 20 points)	19
B. Proposition 84 Land and Water Benefits (Maximum of 30 Points)	20
C. SNC Program Goals (Maximum of 30 points)	21
D. Cooperation and Community Support (Maximum of 10 points)	22
E. Project Design, Management, and Sustainability (Maximum of 10 points)	22
<b>VI. Category Two: Pre-Project Planning Grant Proposals Evaluation Criteria</b>	24
A. Project Quality and Readiness (Maximum of 20 points)	25
B. Proposition 84 Land and Water Benefits (Maximum of 30 points)	26
C. SNC Program Goals (Maximum of 30 points)	27
D. Cooperation and Community Support (Maximum of 10 points)	27
E. Project Management (Maximum of 10 points)	28
<b>VII. Additional Factors and Final Ranking for All Applications</b>	28

<b>APPENDIX A</b> .....	29
<b>Program Geographic Area</b> .....	29
<b>APPENDIX B</b> .....	30
<b>Glossary of Terms</b> .....	30
<b>APPENDIX C</b> .....	36
<b>Performance Measures</b> .....	36
<b>APPENDIX D</b> .....	42
<b>California Environmental Quality Act</b> .....	42

## I. Introduction

California voters passed Proposition 84, the Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coast Protection Bond Act of 2006 (the Act) on November 7, 2006. Proposition 84 added Section 75050 to the Public Resources Code (PRC), authorizing the State to issue bonds, and the Legislature to appropriate the proceeds, for the protection and restoration of rivers, lakes and streams, their watersheds and associated land, water, and other natural resources. Section 75050 (j) allocates \$54 million of these funds for the Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC).

The Laird-Leslie Sierra Nevada Conservancy Act, enacted in 2004 and commencing with PRC Section 33300, established the SNC, and Sections 33343 and 33346 set forth the authority for the SNC to award grants of funds in order to carry out the purposes of the Act. The SNC has adopted a Strategic Plan and Program Guidelines in accordance with the Act; these provide general direction for the SNC's activities and serve as the basis for these Grants Guidelines.

The Grants Guidelines establish the process used by the SNC to solicit applications, evaluate proposals, and authorize grants under the SNC Grants Program from Proposition 84. A [Glossary of Terms](#) is provided at the end of this document.

For the Fiscal Year 2010-11, grant funds will be allocated to two grant categories and will be awarded in one round. Category One grants include acquisition and site improvement/restoration projects. Category Two grants are limited to pre-project planning activities that are associated with a specific future on-the-ground project that meets the SNC Proposition 84 grants criteria. The Grant Guidelines explain the scope of and the requirements for the grant applications.

In Fiscal Year 2010-11 approximately \$10 million will be available for awards and will be distributed in the following:

- 60% of available funds will be awarded for high benefit projects in the 6 Subregions;
- 40% of available funds will be awarded for remaining high benefit projects, regardless of geographic location; and
- If a Subregion does not expend its entire allotment on high benefit projects, the SNC Board will determine whether remaining funds will be awarded to remaining high benefit projects regardless of geographic location or "rolled over for future allocation on a Subregional basis.

Additional funds may be added to the overall amount available at the discretion of the SNC. If such additional funding becomes available, allocation among the Subregions and Regional categories will follow the formula described above.

The SNC will award grants with the primary aim of achieving tangible "on the ground" impacts, consistent with the terms of Proposition 84 (see above) and the SNC's program goals. It is expected that the grants will include a variety of site improvement/restoration

and acquisition projects. Consequently, it is anticipated that approximately 75% of the available funds will be awarded to Category One projects. At the same time, the SNC recognizes the value of activities which prepare for or create the context for other natural resource protection and restoration efforts. This set of projects includes project planning and preparation activities required to ready a specific acquisition or site improvement project, such as:

- Preparing and completing plans, acquiring permits, completing the environmental review process (CEQA), performing appraisals, performing the necessary studies and assessments and developing necessary project designs related to a specific site or physical project
- Preparing plans or supplementing existing plans that will result in a specific project or a set of projects

The SNC will strive to achieve a balance of projects best suited to further the SNC mission and the goals of Proposition 84. The SNC will make every effort, subject to the programmatic limitations of Proposition 84, to ensure that, over time, funds are spread equitably across each of the Subregions and among the program areas, with adequate allowance for variability of costs among the various Subregions and types of projects. In doing so, the SNC recognizes the focus of Proposition 84 may result in some program areas receiving a disproportionate share of resources.

Two Grants Application Packets (GAPs) accompany the Grants Guidelines, and include information and forms needed for each Category of grant applications. For applicants who want more information about the administrative requirements once a grant is authorized, sample grant agreements for each of the Proposition 84 project types are provided at: [http://www.sierranevada.ca.gov/grant\\_applications.html](http://www.sierranevada.ca.gov/grant_applications.html)

**SIERRA NEVADA CONSERVANCY**  
**Proposition 84 Grant Guidelines**  
  
**Funding Distribution**  
**FY 2010 – 11**

- Approximately \$10 million\* available for awards of grants up to \$1 million
- Eligible project types:
  - Category One – Acquisition or Site Improvement / Restoration (\$5,000 to \$1 million)
  - Category Two – Pre-project Planning (up to \$250,000)

**Subregions**  
60% of available funds for Category One and Category Two projects will be distributed equally between the six Subregions.

**Regional**  
40% of available funds for Category One and Category Two Grants will be awarded without regard to geographic location.

The SNC Board will determine the disposition of remaining funds if a Subregion does not award its entire allocation.

\* Consistent with the terms of Proposition 84 and the SNC program goals, it is the SNC's intent to award approximately 75% of the available funds to Category One projects.

*All applicants are strongly encouraged to submit a pre-application to the SNC thirty-days in advance of the application deadline to better ensure the eligibility and completeness of the final application submission.*

## II. General Program Information

### A. Grant Program Requirements

Public Resource Code 75050 (Proposition 84), the funding for grants by the SNC, mandates that awards go only to projects that protect and restore rivers, lakes and streams, their watersheds and associated land, water, and other natural resources. Consistent with the terms of Proposition 84 and with the SNC statutory authority, the SNC will fund projects that address one or more of the program areas listed below:

- Provide increased opportunities for tourism and recreation
- Protect, conserve, and restore the Region's physical, cultural, archaeological, historical, and living resources
- Aid in the preservation of working landscapes
- Reduce the risk of natural disasters, such as wildfires
- Protect and improve water and air quality
- Assist the Regional economy through the operation of the SNC's program
- Undertake efforts to enhance public use and enjoyment of lands owned by the public

All grants must provide direct benefits for the Sierra Nevada Region, as defined by PRC Section 33302 (f); see [Appendix A](#) for definition.

### B. Eligible Applicants

Grant funds may be authorized for:

- **public agencies** (any city, county, district, or joint powers authority; state agency; public university; or federal agency);
- **qualifying nonprofit 501(c)(3) 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 Conservancy.
- **eligible tribal organizations** (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 on pages 52829 to 52835, inclusive, of Number 250 of Volume 53 (December 29, 1988) of the Federal Register, as that list may be updated or amended from time to time).

**NOTE:** As a general rule, organizations or individuals performing work for the Sierra Nevada Conservancy under contract are ineligible to apply for a grant from the SNC during the life of the contract. This policy applies to organizations that:

- contract directly with the SNC;
- are providing services as a subcontractor to an individual or organization contracting directly with the SNC;
- employ an individual on an ongoing basis, who is performing work for the SNC under a contract whether as the contractor or as a subcontractor.

If you have a contract with the SNC, please consult with SNC before commencing preparation of your application.

### **C. Eligible Projects**

Funds will be authorized for the planning or implementation of projects that are consistent with the provisions of these guidelines. The SNC Program Guidelines contain examples of potential projects that may be helpful in creating proposals; however, these examples are not meant to be comprehensive. The SNC Program Guidelines are available on the SNC Web site at:

<http://www.sierranevada.ca.gov/docs/progguidFINWEB.pdf>.

Eligible projects must contribute to the protection or restoration of rivers, lakes and streams, their watersheds and associated land, water, and other natural resources. The projects must also address one or more of the SNC's Program areas.

Generally, funds must be expended within the statutory boundaries of the Sierra Nevada Conservancy to be eligible for funding. Certain types of projects outside the legal boundaries may also be eligible if they meet all guideline requirements of the SNC and have a direct benefit to the Region. Applicants should consult with SNC when such projects are being considered. An example of these projects might include physical projects which result in tangible benefits to resources within the boundaries of the SNC.

Language concerning project eligibility, and any determinations of eligible costs (see below), are subject to applicable conditions and limitations which may later be set forth in the State Budget Act or other official guidance.

### **D. Eligible Costs**

Only direct project costs for items within the scope of the project and within the time frame of the project agreement are eligible. Project-specific performance measures and reporting are required to be addressed in the project budget.

Eligible administrative costs must be directly related to the project and may not exceed 15 percent of the project implementation cost. To determine the amount of eligible administrative costs, the applicant must first determine the cost of

implementing the project, not including any administrative costs. Once the project implementation cost has been determined, the applicant may calculate administrative costs and include them in the total grant request.

## **E. Ineligible Costs**

Indirect expenditures billed as a percentage of implementation costs are not eligible for reimbursement. In addition, grant funding may not be used to:

- Address a violation of, or an order(citation) to comply with, any law or regulation;
- Implement required mitigation measures unless funding facilitates the implementation of a specific project that would itself be eligible for SNC Proposition 84 grant funding;
- Establish or increase a legal defense fund or endowment;
- Make a donation to other organizations; or
- Pay for food or refreshments.

If ineligible costs are included in the project budget, it could result in the project being deemed ineligible in total. The project may be approved for funding with the total amount of the award reduced by the amount of the ineligible costs. In that event, the SNC will contact the applicant to confirm that the project is still viable. Applicants should avoid including ineligible costs in the application and should contact SNC staff with questions.

## **F. Grant Provisions**

Grant-eligible costs may be incurred by a recipient entity only after the entity has entered into an agreement with the SNC on the terms and conditions. Only costs incurred after a grant agreement is fully executed will be eligible for reimbursement. The SNC may provide technical assistance to the grantee to ensure efficient administration of the grant.

Work on projects funded by grants authorized in FY 2010-11 must be completed and fully invoiced by no later than the date specified in the grant agreement

SNC may request that grantees provide public recognition to the SNC's Proposition 84 grant program through signage or written materials for public distribution, as appropriate.

## **G. Performance Measures and Reporting**

Performance measures are used to track progress toward project goals and desired outcomes. (see [Appendix C](#)) They provide a means of reliably measuring and reporting the outcomes and effectiveness of a project and how it contributes to SNC achieving its programmatic goals.

Applicants must propose project-specific performance measures at the time of application submittal. Detailed information and recommended performance measures can be found in [Appendix C](#) of this document. Information on performance measures specific to each Category can be found in the appropriate GAP. Applicants may also propose alternative performance measures, which will be subject to the approval of SNC staff if the grant is authorized. The proposed measure(s) will be finalized in consultation with SNC staff prior to grant agreement approval. Please refer to the Evaluation and Criteria, Sections B and C for each Grant Category for further description of how performance measures will be considered as part of the application.

All grantees will be required to provide periodic progress reports and a final report. The final report must include data related to the project performance measures. See Exhibit B of the sample grant agreements at [http://www.sierranevada.ca.gov/grant\\_applications.html](http://www.sierranevada.ca.gov/grant_applications.html) for additional information on the required contents of these reports.

## **H. Consultation and Cooperation with Local Agencies**

As required by PRC 33342, “the SNC shall cooperate with and consult with the city or county where a grant is proposed or an interest in real property is proposed to be acquired; and shall, as necessary or appropriate, coordinate its efforts with other state agencies. The SNC shall, as necessary and appropriate, cooperate and consult with a public water system that owns or operates facilities, including lands appurtenant thereto, where a grant is proposed or an interest in land is proposed to be acquired.” The SNC will provide notification to the appropriate local government entities at the point at which a project is deemed eligible and is being considered for funding.

For all grants, the SNC 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 Subregional Board representative will also be notified at this time and may wish to communicate with the affected entities as well.

Applicants should seek support of, or, at a minimum, consult with affected local governments. Applications that include a project-specific resolution of support from the affected city and/or county and water agency (when appropriate), may be deemed to have met this “cooperate and consult” requirement.

## **III. Grant Program Categories**

Grants are authorized projects between \$5,000 and \$1,000,000 for Category One grants and up to \$250,000 for Category Two grants. Applications for grants are solicited, reviewed, and authorized by the SNC Board on an annual cycle.

Grants of less than \$50,000 may be authorized by the Board or alternatively, the Executive Officer may award such grants for Category Two projects in instances where the project is ranked as high benefit and extenuating circumstances or time constraints would render the project unviable without prompt action. The total amount of such authorizations by the Executive Officer will be limited to a maximum of \$250,000 for the fiscal year. Any such authorizations shall be reported to the Board at the next scheduled Board meeting. All Category Two requests exceeding \$50,000 and all Category One requests require Board approval.

The Sierra Nevada Conservancy offers Proposition 84 grants in two categories and one funding round for the Fiscal Year 2010-11. All projects must be eligible under Proposition 84 criteria and address at least one of the SNC program areas. The categories and eligible types of grants are described below.

An applicant may not combine requests for planning or pre-project planning activities with acquisition, or site improvements/restoration in a single grant proposal. However, applicants can break a large project into phases and submit applications for each phase, such as a Category Two application for an appraisal and a subsequent Category One application for an acquisition in the next round of funding. Applicants should consult with SNC staff to determine the most appropriate type of grant opportunity for potential projects.

**A. Category One: Acquisition and Site Improvement /Restoration**

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

- Prevention or amelioration of current or anticipated adverse impacts to natural resources;
- Preservation and/or enhancement of agricultural, forest, rangeland, or other working landscapes;
- Reduction or prevention of soil erosion;
- Reduction of fuel hazards or other disaster risks with potential to detrimentally affect natural resources;
- Control and elimination of invasive species;
- Elimination, conversion, relocation, and/or rehabilitation of roads and trails to protect natural resources;
- Improvement or construction of physical structures or facilities to protect natural resources;
- Improvement of natural recharge/storage of water; or
- Protection and enhancement of fish and wildlife habitat.

**B. Category Two: Pre-project Planning required to ready acquisition or site improvement projects that are eligible for Proposition 84 funding.**

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

- Preparing and completing plans for specific project design;
- Acquiring permits;
- Completing the environmental review process (CEQA, etc.);
- Performing appraisals and other pre-acquisition tasks;

- Performing necessary studies, surveys, and assessments related to a specific project; or
- Preparing plans or supplementing existing plans that will result in a specific project or a set of projects.

**NOTE:** All projects must address one or more of the Program Goals and meet the requirements of Proposition 84 described in the introduction, and associated with a current or future on-the-ground project.

## IV. Specific Requirements for Category One Grants

### A. Acquisition Projects

#### 1. Overview

Although the SNC is prohibited by statute (PRC 33347) from purchasing real property outright (i.e., fee title), it can fund the acquisition of fee title by other eligible entities. The SNC may make grants to public agencies, qualifying nonprofit organizations, and eligible tribal organizations to acquire an interest in real property, either fee title or a less-than-fee interest, from willing sellers only. The SNC may also award grants for the acquisition of water rights from willing sellers. All interests to be acquired must be in perpetuity (permanent); thus, no grants will be awarded for acquisition of temporary easements, leaseholds, or the like.

Proposition 84 funds may not be used to retire debt previously incurred by an eligible applicant in connection with the applicant's acquisition of a real property interest.

#### 2. Requirements

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

- (a) The intended use of the property.
- (b) The manner in which the land will be managed.
- (c) How the cost of ongoing management will be funded.

In addition, the application is required to include:

- (d) A recent appraisal (If the appraisal is older than one year, the applicant must consult with SNC staff prior to submission).
- (e) If project applicant intends to transfer the responsibility for the project to a third party in the future, evidence that the third party is aware, willing, and capable of assuming the long-term management of the project.

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.

In the case of a grant of funds to acquire an interest in real property (including, but not limited to, fee title), the agreement between the SNC and the recipient will require all of the following:

- (a) The purchase price of an interest in real property acquired shall not exceed fair market value as established by an appraisal which meets state standards and which is approved by the SNC. Appraisals may require more than one pre-approval review if the appraised value of the property is based on the presence of resources such as timber, mineral rights, water rights, carbon sequestration potential, and/or historic values, or the inclusion of both real and personal property.
- (b) The terms under which the interest in real property is acquired shall be subject to the SNC's approval.
- (c) An interest in real property to be acquired under the grant shall not be used as security for a debt unless the SNC approves the transaction.
- (d) The transfer of an interest in the real property shall be subject to approval of the SNC, and a new agreement sufficient to protect the public interest shall be entered into between the SNC and the transferee.

The deed or instrument by which the grantee acquires an interest in real property under the grant shall include a power of termination on the part of the SNC. The deed or instrument shall provide that the SNC may exercise the power of termination by notice in the event of the grantee's violation of the purpose of the grant through breach of a material term or condition thereof, and that, upon recordation of the notice, full title to the interest in real property identified in the notice shall immediately vest in the SNC, or in another public agency or a nonprofit organization or tribal organization designated by the SNC to which the SNC conveys or has conveyed its interest.

## **B. Site Improvement/Restoration Projects**

### **1. Overview**

As described in the "[Eligible Projects](#)" section earlier in this document, a wide array of potential projects will be considered by the SNC. Applicants should consult with SNC staff in determining the appropriateness of potential projects.

## 2. Requirements

- All applications are required to address how CEQA compliance will be achieved. If CEQA compliance is dependent upon current completed and adopted environmental documents, copies must be provided at the time of application. In addition, completed NEPA documents must be included for projects performed by federal agencies or on federally managed lands. If the applicant believes that the project is categorically exempt or is not a “project” under CEQA, the application should include an explanation for such a conclusion.
- All applications are required to identify all permits necessary to complete the project.

## 3. Land Tenure

Applicants must demonstrate and document to the SNC that they have adequate tenure to, and site control of, the properties to be improved or restored.

Adequate land tenure includes, but is not necessarily limited to:

- Fee title ownership.
- An easement or license agreement, sufficient for completion of the project consistent with the terms and conditions of the grant agreement.
- Other 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 the project.<sup>1</sup>
- For projects involving multiple landowners, a clearly defined process which ensures that property owner permission is obtained to complete the project.
- In cases where the project applicant intends to transfer the responsibility for the project to a third party in the future, evidence is required that the third party is aware, willing, and capable of assuming the project’s long-term management.

### 1. Land Tenure Requirements – Standard Process

If the land tenure requirement is met through fee title ownership or other deeded interest, the applicant shall provide a copy of the recorded deed. If property is not owned in fee title, the applicant shall provide supporting documentation (copy of lease, easement deed, or agreement, etc.) with the application in order to verify that the land tenure requirement has been met.

---

<sup>1</sup> Adequate site control is the power or authority to conduct activities that are necessary for completion of the project consistent with the terms and conditions of the grant agreement.

## 2. Land Tenure Requirements – Alternate Process

When an applicant does not have tenure at the time of application, but intends to establish tenure via an agreement that will be signed upon grant authorization, the applicant must follow the alternate land tenure process by:

- Submitting a copy of the proposed agreement at the time of application, as well as letters from the applicant and the prospective landlord in which each commits to sign the proposed agreement should the application be successful.
- Once a project has been authorized for funding, the applicant must submit a fully executed agreement which meets the land tenure requirements within 60 days of SNC Board authorization to execute the grant agreement.

## IV. Applying for a Grant

### A. General Information

All application materials and forms will be available from the SNC Web site or SNC offices by request (also refer to the checklist in the appropriate GAP). All application materials are due and must be delivered to the SNC headquarters office in Auburn by 5:00 PM on the application due date or postmarked no later than the due date. Please contact SNC staff to coordinate submittal and ensure receipt.

#### 1. Pre-Application

Applicants are strongly encouraged to consult with SNC staff at least 30 days prior to the filing deadline to receive pre-application assistance. Applicants seeking assistance should provide a pre-project description of no more than one page in length (see pre-application form on the SNC Web site or as an exhibit of any GAP). Staff feedback will help the applicant develop an eligible, complete, and more successful application. Staff will also assign an SNC reference number to the project that should be used on all pertinent forms associated with a subsequent application for the same project.

#### 2. Application

Applications submitted by the deadline will be evaluated by SNC staff for eligibility, completeness, and compliance with program requirements. An applicant may submit applications for more than one project; however, each individual project must have its own application. Applications that are incomplete may be not be processed or evaluated by the SNC.

#### 3. Appraisals for Acquisition Projects

All appraisals are requested at time of application, but applicants have 60 days from application due date to provide the SNC with a completed appraisal. Any applicant taking advantage of this delay does so at his/her own risk, as the SNC cannot guarantee that necessary reviews will be conducted in time to meet the Board schedule.

4. Environmental Documents

The SNC is required to comply with California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) at the time the Board authorizes any grants. This means, we must have completed environmental documentation for our Board to make the findings necessary to authorize grant requests. The type, cost, timing and amount of documentation needed to satisfy CEQA requirements can vary greatly depending on the type and scope of the proposed project and the type of applicant.

All grant applications submitted to the SNC will be reviewed for CEQA compliance. Since 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 before the application deadline to determine what documents will be needed for inclusion in the application packet in order for the application to be eligible for evaluation.

For purposes of CEQA compliance, all activities proposed within a grant application will fall into one of three categories:

a) *“Not a “Project”*: The action is not defined as a “Project” under CEQA and therefore is not subject to CEQA review. No CEQA compliance documentation is required of the applicant in this situation. The application should include a brief description of why the applicant believes this to be the case.

b) *Exempt from CEQA either statutorily or categorically*. Specific types of activities have been identified as exempt from environmental analysis under CEQA. SNC requires the filing of a Notice of Exemption for categorically or statutorily exempt projects. Requirements for projects in this category differ by applicant type, as follows:

- i. State or local agencies authorized to certify CEQA documents are required to submit the appropriate, completed CEQA documents, including a filed Notice of Exemption, with the application.
- ii. For all other applicants (nonprofit organizations, federal agencies, tribal entities), the SNC *may* act as lead agency in the CEQA process and *may* be able to file a Notice of Exemption for a project – but applicants must consult with SNC staff in advance to determine whether the SNC can act as lead agency.

c) *Subject to CEQA Analysis*: Activities that do not fall into the first two categories will require completion of additional environmental documentation – e.g. Negative Declaration, Mitigated Negative Declaration, or Environmental Impact Report. SNC requires copies of the adopted environmental documentation and the filed Notice of Determination to be submitted with the application. If a project involves National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) documentation because the applicant is a federal agency or the project is occurring on federal land, the applicant must consult with SNC staff to determine the appropriate mechanism for meeting CEQA requirements in order to be eligible for awarding of State funds.

Additional discussion and direction regarding SNC requirements and the CEQA process may be found in [Appendix D](#). We strongly encourage you to contact the SNC staff for assistance well in advance of the application deadline since CEQA compliance can require a fair amount of time to complete.

5. Variable Deliverable Projects

If a project has the possibility of resulting in an end product that contains a range of numerical completion objectives (deliverables), the grant proposal and the grant agreement must indicate the minimum numerical objective and the maximum numerical objective (deliverables) that the project will achieve. This applies to projects where the exact amount of the cost of these activities can only be estimated at the time the project proposal is submitted to SNC. The range of numerical objectives must be part of the Project Description in the application and on the Exhibit A to any grant agreement. Examples of these types of projects include, but are not necessarily limited to:

- Where a minimum and maximum number of acres are specified in fire fuel clearing activities, revegetation projects, invasive flora removal projects; and
- When estimating linear feet of creek bed to be restored, linear feet of fencing or wall building to be completed.

In addition to describing the range of completion objectives in the grant application and grant agreement, the CEQA clearances for the project, if required, must encompass:

- The entire upper range of project activities you propose; and
- The maximum amount of land, water surface, or other physical area, that the project may include, including cumulative impacts resulting from the maximum activity level proposed for your project.

## **B. Process**

The SNC offers grants for acquisition, site improvement/restoration projects, and pre-project planning activities. This section outlines the process for all projects.

To maintain fairness for all competitors, SNC staff will provide information and assistance in developing applications only to the point of application submission. SNC staff may contact applicants after the submission deadlines to seek clarification of previously submitted items.

- Project applications will be solicited, reviewed, and authorized on an annual cycle.
- Grants will be authorized by the SNC Board for two categories of projects with funding levels as follows:

Category One: Acquisition or Site Improvement/Restoration  
(\$5,000 - \$1,000,000)

Category Two: Pre-Project Planning (up to \$250,000)

The most current application process information will be provided on the SNC Web site at: <http://www.sierranevada.ca.gov/grants.html>. The Grant Application Packets for each project category are available at: [http://www.sierranevada.ca.gov/grant\\_applications.html](http://www.sierranevada.ca.gov/grant_applications.html).

## **V. Category One: Acquisition or Site Improvement/Restoration Grant Proposals Evaluation Criteria**

As stated previously, in order to be eligible for Proposition 84 funding a project must: a) contribute to the protection and restoration of rivers, lakes and streams, their watersheds and associated land, water, and other natural resources; AND b) address one or more of the seven SNC program areas.

Applicants must provide a written answer to each question or respond to each statement in the evaluation criteria as it pertains to the project. The criteria headings must be included in each response, i.e. Project Quality and Readiness, Proposition 84 Land and Water Benefits, SNC Program Goals, etc. Please do not include the questions or directions themselves.

Projects will be evaluated on the following criteria to determine which projects are consistent with the requirements of Proposition 84 and provide the greatest contribution to achieving the SNC's mission. Please review the application for completeness in order to receive the highest potential points. Applications that are incomplete may be not be processed or evaluated by the SNC.

The total number of points possible for each application is 100.

**A. Project Quality and Readiness (Maximum of 20 points)**

The level of detail included in the project description should allow a person unfamiliar with the project to understand the purpose, goals, and outcomes of the project. The project description should allow for review of consistency with site plans, budget items, and maps.

1. Application Completeness (for SNC use only)

Does the application include all of the information necessary for adequate evaluation of the project benefits? Was information provided in a manner consistent with guidelines and application packet?

2. General Description

Describe the proposed project in detail, including purpose, goals and deliverables. Stipulate specifically what work will be completed utilizing SNC grant funding. Describe methods to be used to accomplish the project and the role of the applicant and all partners/contractors. Explain if implementation of the project is part of a larger plan and how it relates to other projects. Describe related activities that have been completed to date and how the project supports these efforts. Describe what steps of the project are already complete or in progress.

3. Workplan and Schedule

- (a) In the workplan, describe the specific tasks and schedule needed to complete the project.
- (b) Describe the factors affecting the project's timeline and completion, and how these factors will be addressed. Describe how the project will be implemented in a timely manner.

4. Budget

NOTE: The Budget section needs to be consistent with the Project Summary located in the appropriate GAP at:

[http://www.sierranevada.ca.gov/grant\\_applications.html](http://www.sierranevada.ca.gov/grant_applications.html).

- (a) Describe in detail any monetary and/or the value of in-kind support that contributes to the project, including the source(s) of funds already committed to the project. Provide detailed information on any other state, federal, or local funding sought or received for the project. Cite specific dollar amounts for cash contributions or in-kind services, such as volunteer effort, technical expertise, etc. Other contributions to the project are not required in order to receive an SNC grant. However, projects that include other sources of funds may receive higher scores.
- (b) Specify what portions of the project (specific tasks, deliverables, and associated staff time), are requested to be funded by the SNC grant. This budget description should be sufficiently detailed. Also, identify the amount, date available, and source of other funds.

- (c) If a project depends on other funding sources, describe what has been done to date and future actions that will be taken to secure the remaining funding.
  - (d) If a project does not depend on other funding sources, the application is required to include a statement that funding from SNC will be sufficient to complete the project.
  - (e) If SNC grant funds are sought as a match against other state generated funds, the application is required to provide documentation that verifies the SNC state grant funds may in fact be used as a match for those other state funds.
  - (f) Describe the cost-effectiveness of the project. For example, describe how costs compare to similar projects, how the project may use existing data and resources, how the funds are leveraged, and/or how the project will save costs in the future.
5. Restrictions, technical documents, and agreements  
 Descriptions of the status of the following and the appropriate documentation are required. (In case of uncertainty, applicants should consult with SNC staff to determine the necessity of documentation prior to application submittal.)
- (a) Agreements and commitments from project partners. Partnerships or collaborations deemed essential for the implementation of the grant project must be firmly established at the time of application and must be identified in the application by means of letters of acknowledgment from said partners. Copies of agreements or drafts of agreements should be submitted if executed.
  - (b) Copy of “willing seller” letter (**acquisitions only**).
  - (c) Preliminary title report and terms of sale, option to purchase, or easement with a willing seller (**acquisitions only**).
  - (d) Draft conservation easement language (**conservation easements only**).
  - (e) Property restrictions and/or encumbrances (such as contracts, easements, and mineral rights).
  - (f) Any land listed under the Williamson Act is required to be identified.
  - (g) Necessary permits: please refer to the GAP for Acquisition and Site Improvement/Restoration projects for important details about permits. Description of land tenure held (**site improvement/restoration projects only**).

Points will be awarded based on the degree of project quality and readiness.

**B. Proposition 84 Land and Water Benefits (Maximum of 30 Points)**

1. Describe how the project specifically contributes to the Proposition 84 goals of protection and restoration of rivers, lakes and streams, their watersheds and associated land, water, and other natural resources. Include how the project provides direct, indirect, and long term benefits

and prevents adverse impacts or addresses existing or potential threats to water, watersheds and other natural resources. Describe the performance measures that are chosen and how they will be used to quantify benefits (see [Appendix C](#)).

2. Describe the sustainability of the project in the context of the surrounding watershed and land uses, including the potential impacts to the surrounding watershed and lands, and the potential impact that future activities on the surrounding watershed and lands may have on the project area.
3. If applicable (depending on project type and purpose), describe the extent to which project activities could have a direct impact on addressing the impacts of climate change (e.g. carbon sequestration, reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, increased natural storage of water, etc.) in the Sierra and the rest of California. Identify the climate change risks in the project area and the project's intent to address one or more, including but not limited to reduction of wildfire threat, extension of sensitive species' habitat corridors, sustainable and beneficial use of biomass, development of clean energy opportunities, and retained and/or enhanced carbon sequestration.

Points will be awarded based on the degree to which the project benefits the resources described above.

**C. SNC Program Goals (Maximum of 30 points)**

1. Describe how the project will result in direct benefits in one or more of the SNC program goals listed below. Describe tangible benefits, and how performance measures will be used to quantify benefits (see [Appendix C](#)). Do not include incidental or secondary benefits.
  - (a) Provide increased opportunities for tourism and recreation.
  - (b) Protect, conserve, and restore the Region's physical, cultural, archaeological, historical, and living resources.
  - (c) Aid in the preservation of working landscapes.
  - (d) Reduce the risk of natural disasters, such as wildfires.
  - (e) Protect and improve water and air quality.
  - (f) Assist the Regional economy through the operation of the SNC's program.
  - (g) Undertake efforts to enhance public use and enjoyment of lands owned by the public.

Points will be awarded based on the degree to which the project provides direct benefits consistent with one or more SNC program goals. Projects that provide direct benefits to multiple program goals will be awarded higher scores.

**D. Cooperation and Community Support (Maximum of 10 points)**

1. Describe demonstrated community support and project partners. Letters of support or other indications of support are encouraged, but optional. However, in order to be considered for the purpose of scoring, they must be included in the application and written on the supporting agency's or organization's letterhead.
2. Describe the efforts to include various stakeholders in planning and/or implementation of the project.
  - (a) Consultation and cooperation with local, state, and federal agencies, including methods used to solicit participation.
  - (b) The use of stakeholders in designing and/or implementing the project, including methods used to solicit participation. Describe the involvement of youth in the project, if appropriate.
3. Describe any known project opposition with an explanation of the nature of the concerns, and any efforts that have been taken to address the concerns.
4. Explain how the project will provide educational opportunities about the Sierra Nevada, the SNC, and the project area for children, schools, and communities.
5. Describe the compatibility of the project with plans including, but not limited to, general plans, recreation plans, urban water management plans, integrated regional water management plans, community wildfire protection plans, and resource conservation plans, as well as the potential impact these plans may have on the long-term sustainability of the project.
6. Explain how the benefits of the completed project would be communicated to local and regional media; elected and agency officials from within the Region; elected and agency officials from outside the Region; non-governmental and business partners; and others.

Points will be awarded based on the degree to which the project exhibits cooperation, community support, compatibility with existing plans, and potential for educational benefits.

**E. Project Design, Management, and Sustainability (Maximum of 10 points)**

1. Describe the capability of applicant and/or partners to provide for all relevant aspects of an integrated management process that includes project planning, acquisition, restoration, monitoring, operation, and maintenance. This should include a description of the organization's structure, longevity, staffing, capability, and experience. The applicant should demonstrate that staff or partners involved in the project will utilize all the applicable basic elements of a project management process. Provide information on the following:
  - (a) Fiscal partners and their roles in the project as related to the workplan

- (b) Applicant's or partners' demonstrated ability or type of training received to implement the proposed project
  - (c) All elements of a management process, including:
    - i. The appropriate up-front planning that demonstrates the project need
    - ii. The expertise needed to complete the project within the applicant's or its partners' organization
    - iii. Utilizing appropriate design to obtain maximum sustainability of the proposed project
    - iv. A demonstrated ability to design the project to minimize impact to the natural and cultural resources
    - v. Construction techniques that utilize aesthetic design and compatible or renewable material resources (for site improvement/restoration projects)
    - vi. A monitoring and maintenance process that keeps the proposed project at intended standards and utilizes performance measures as appropriate. Performance measures should include, but are not limited to, SNC project performance measures listed in Appendix C of the Grant Guidelines and the appropriate GAP.
2. Describe how the project is sustainable (can be continued over a long period of time without causing damage to the environment and community). Please include a description of what is occurring or planned for the surrounding watershed and lands (both on contiguous parcels and on the general area) and the effect it may have on the project's sustainability.
3. Describe how the long-term management of the project will ensure the benefits will be achieved and maintained to protect the value of the resource. Interest in real property acquired with Proposition 84 grant funding must be in perpetuity. Benefits of site improvement/restoration projects should be realized for a minimum of 10 years or for a period determined to be necessary by the SNC for successful project implementation.
- a) Describe the long-term management plan goals that result in sustaining the character and quality of the landscape and its natural resources. (For example: Best Management Practices for grazing, timber harvest, or other uses of the property)
  - b) Describe the extent of all current or existing management practices or principles used to manage the property and indicate any proposed changes or additions in the long-term management plan. Describe how future physical management activities will be performed, who will be responsible for performing them, how frequently they will be performed, and how the management will be documented.

- c) What activities are anticipated or planned to occur on the property in accordance with the long term management plan and BMP's?
- d) List all resources or references used to help develop your management plan (i.e. publications, Agricultural extension, RCD's, NRCS, etc.)
- f) Describe how the project is useful as a model in the program area(s) or in other parts of the Region, if appropriate (i.e. innovative partnerships, approaches, problem-solving, or research).

Points will be awarded based on the degree to which the project demonstrates adequate design, management capacity, sustainability, and utilizes innovative approaches.

## **VI. Category Two: Pre-Project Planning Grant Proposals Evaluation Criteria**

As stated previously, in order to be eligible for Proposition 84 funding, a Category Two project must lead directly to a project on the ground that must: a) contribute to the protection and restoration of rivers, lakes and streams, their watersheds and associated land, water, and other natural resources; AND b) address one or more of the seven SNC program areas.

Applicants must provide a written answer to each question or respond to each statement in the evaluation criteria as it pertains to the project. The criteria headings must be included in each response, e.g. Project Quality and Readiness, Proposition 84 Land and Water Benefits, SNC Program Goals, etc. Please do not include the questions or directions themselves.

In evaluating proposals for Pre-Project Planning funding, Project Quality and Readiness, Proposition 84 Land and Water Benefits, and SNC Program Goals (Paragraphs A, B, and C) are primary considerations. Cooperation and Community Support and Project Management, (Paragraphs D and E) are secondary considerations.

Projects will be evaluated on the following criteria in order to determine which projects are consistent with the requirements of Proposition 84 and provide the greatest contribution to achieving the SNC's mission. Please review the application for completeness before submission in order to receive the highest potential points. Applications that are incomplete may not be processed or evaluated by the SNC.

The total number of points possible for each application is 100.

**A. Project Quality and Readiness (Maximum of 20 points)**

The level of detail included in the project description should allow a person unfamiliar with the project to understand the purpose, goals, and outcomes of the project. The project description should allow for review of consistency with any site plans, budget items and maps.

1. Application Completeness (for SNC use only)

Does the application include all of the information necessary for adequate evaluation of the project benefits? Was information provided in a manner consistent with guidelines and application packet?

2. General Description

Describe the proposed project in detail including purpose, goals and deliverables. Stipulate specifically what work will be completed utilizing SNC grant funding. Describe methods to be used to accomplish the project and the role of applicant and all partners/contractors. Explain if implementation of the project is part of a larger plan and how it relates to other projects. Describe related activities that have been completed to date and how the project supports these efforts. Describe what steps of the project are already complete or in progress.

3. Workplan and Schedule

(a) In the workplan, describe the specific tasks and schedule needed to complete the project.

(b) Describe the factors affecting the project timeline and completion such as availability of labor and materials, and how these factors will be addressed. Describe how the project will be implemented in a timely manner.

4. Budget

NOTE: This section needs to be consistent with the Project Summary located in the appropriate GAP at:

[http://www.sierranevada.ca.gov/grant\\_applications.html](http://www.sierranevada.ca.gov/grant_applications.html).

(a) Describe in detail any monetary and/or the value of in-kind support that is a part of the project, including the source(s) of funds already committed to the project. Provide detailed information on any other state, federal, or local funding sought or received for the project. Cite specific dollar amounts for cash contributions and in-kind services, such as volunteer effort, technical expertise, etc. Other contributions to the project are not required in order to receive a grant. However, projects that include other sources of funds may receive higher scores. Specify what portions of the project (tasks, deliverables, engineering, planning, and associated staff time) are requested to be funded by the SNC grant. Also identify the amount, date available, and source of other funds. This budget description shall be sufficiently detailed. If a

project depends on other funding sources, describe what has been done to date and future actions that will be taken to secure the remaining funding.

- (b) If a project does not depend on other funding sources, the application is required to include a statement that funding from SNC will be sufficient to complete the project.
  - (c) If SNC grant funds are sought as a match against other state generated funds, the application is required to provide documentation that verifies the SNC state grant funds may in fact be used as a match.
  - (d) Describe the cost-effectiveness of the project. For example, describe how costs compare to similar projects, how the project may use existing data and resources, and how the project will save costs in the future.
5. Status of agreements and land tenure  
Descriptions of the status of the documentation are required for the following, as appropriate for the project:
- (a) Agreements and commitments from project partners. Partnerships or collaborations deemed essential for the implementation of the grant project must be firmly established at the time of application and must be identified in the application by means of a letter of acknowledgement by said partners.
  - (b) Indication of the land tenure held (as applicable).

Points will be awarded based on the degree of project quality and readiness.

**B. Proposition 84 Land and Water Benefits (Maximum of 30 points)**

1. Describe how this project would lead to the implementation of a future project, and how that project would contribute to the protection and restoration of rivers, lakes and streams, their watersheds and associated land, water, and other natural resources. Include how the project provides direct, indirect and long term benefits; avoids adverse impacts; and addresses existing or potential threats to water and watersheds and other natural resources. Describe the performance measures that are chosen and how they will be used to quantify benefits (see [Appendix C](#)).
2. Describe the sustainability of the future project in the context of the surrounding watershed and land uses, including the potential impacts to the surrounding watershed and lands, and the potential impact that future activities on the surrounding watershed and lands may have on the project area.
3. Identify the climate change risks in the future project area and the future project's intent to address one or more, including but not limited to reduction of wildfire threat, extension of sensitive species' habitat corridors, sustainable and beneficial use of biomass, development of clean energy opportunities, and retained and/or enhanced carbon sequestration.

**C. SNC Program Goals (Maximum of 30 points)**

1. Describe how the project will result in direct benefits in one or more of the SNC program goals listed below. Describe direct tangible benefits, and how performance measures will be used to quantify benefits (see appendix C). Do not include incidental or secondary benefits.
  - (a) Provide increased opportunities for tourism and recreation.
  - (b) Protect, conserve, and restore the Region's physical, cultural, archaeological, historical, and living resources.
  - (c) Aid in the preservation of working landscapes.
  - (d) Reduce the risk of natural disasters, such as wildfires.
  - (e) Protect and improve water and air quality.
  - (f) Assist the Regional economy through the operation of the SNC's program.
  - (g) Undertake efforts to enhance public use and enjoyment of lands owned by the public.

Points will be awarded based on the degree to which the project leads to benefits consistent with one or more SNC program goals. Projects that lead to direct benefits to multiple program goals will be awarded higher scores.

**D. Cooperation and Community Support (Maximum of 10 points)**

1. Describe demonstrated community support and project partners. Letters of support or other indications of support are encouraged, but optional. However, in order to be considered for the purpose of scoring, they must be included in the application and written on the supporting agency's or organization's letterhead.
2. Explain why this project is important to and/or impacts the nearby communities and/or its geographic location.
3. Describe the efforts to include various stakeholders in planning and/or implementation of the project.
  - (a) Consultation and cooperation with local, state, and federal agencies, including methods used to solicit participation.
  - (b) The use of stakeholders in designing and/or implementing the project, including methods used to solicit participation. Describe the involvement of youth in the project, if appropriate.
4. Describe any known project opposition with an explanation of the nature of the concerns, and any efforts that have been taken to address the concerns.
5. Describe the compatibility of the project with plans including, but not limited to, general plans, recreation plans, urban water management plans, integrated regional water management plans, community wildfire protection plans, and resource conservation plans, as well as the potential impact these plans may have on the long term sustainability of the project.
6. Explain how the benefits of the completed project would be communicated

to local and regional media; elected and agency officials from within the Region; elected and agency officials from outside the Region; non-governmental and business partners; and others.

Points will be awarded based on the degree to which the project exhibits cooperation, community support, and compatibility with existing plans.

**E. Project Management (Maximum of 10 points)**

Describe the capability of applicant and/or partners to provide for all relevant aspects of an integrated management process that ensures successful project planning and implementation. This should include a description of the organization's structure, longevity, staffing, capability, and experience. The applicant should demonstrate that staff or partners involved in the project will utilize all the applicable basic elements of a project management process. Provide information on the following:

1. Fiscal partners and their roles in the project as related to the workplan
2. Applicant's or partners' demonstrated ability or type of training received to implement the proposed project

Points will be awarded based on the degree to which the project demonstrates management capacity.

**VII. Additional Factors and Final Ranking for All Applications**

Site visits may be used as an evaluation tool for certain projects. The purpose is to better understand the project as described in the application and its contextual significance. Clarification of facts previously supplied by the applicant is the goal for the site visit; submission of new information is not allowed.

For the purposes of final rankings, after all projects have been scored, they will be placed in one of three ranks: High Benefit, Medium Benefit, and Low Benefit. In determining the appropriate rank, the SNC will consider the score, along with other factors such as geographic distribution and project type diversity. Final recommendations for authorization by the SNC Board will be made in consultation with the Board Subregional committees.

Scoring summary information will be made public at the time recommendations are publicly noticed, usually two weeks prior to the Board meeting at which action is proposed. This information may include rankings, and a narrative justification for recommendations.

## APPENDIX A

### **Program Geographic Area**

Project must be located in, or partly in, the boundaries of the Sierra Nevada Region to be eligible. PRC Section 33302 (f) defines the Sierra Nevada Region as the area lying within the Counties of Alpine, Amador, Butte, Calaveras, El Dorado, Fresno, Inyo, Kern, Lassen, Madera, Mariposa, Modoc, Mono, Nevada, Placer, Plumas, Shasta, Sierra, Tehama, Tulare, Tuolumne, and Yuba, bounded as follows:

On the east by the eastern boundary of the State of California; the crest of the White/Inyo ranges; and State Routes 395 and 14 south of Olancho; on the south by State Route 58, Tehachapi Creek, and Caliente Creek; on the west by the line of 1,250 feet above sea level from Caliente Creek to the Kern/Tulare County line; the lower level of the western slope's blue oak woodland, from the Kern/Tulare County line to the Sacramento River near the mouth of Seven-Mile Creek north of Red Bluff; the Sacramento River from Seven-Mile Creek north to Cow Creek below Redding; Cow Creek, Little Cow Creek, Dry Creek, and the Shasta National Forest portion of Bear Mountain Road, between the Sacramento River and Shasta Lake; the Pit River Arm of Shasta Lake; the northerly boundary of the Pit River watershed; the southerly and easterly boundaries of Siskiyou County; and within Modoc County, the easterly boundary of the Klamath River watershed; and on the north by the northern boundary of the State of California; excluding both of the following:

- (1) The Lake Tahoe Region, as described in Section 66905.5 of the Government Code, where it is defined as "Region."
- (2) The San Joaquin River Parkway, as described in Section 32510.

See: <http://www.sierranevada.ca.gov/maps.html> for a general map of the Region; however applicants should contact staff to verify whether project is located in an eligible area.

## APPENDIX B

### **Glossary of Terms**

Unless otherwise stated, the terms used in the SNC Proposition 84 Grants Guidelines and Grants Application Packets shall have the following meanings:

Acquisition – To obtain ownership of the fee title or any other permanent interest in real property, including easements and development rights. Leaseholds and rentals do not constitute Acquisition.

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

Applicant – Eligible entities as defined by the SNC Program.

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

Appraisal - An estimate of the value of real property for sale or acquisition.

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. The authorized representative may designate an alternate by informing SNC in writing.

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 84, Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coast Protection Bond Act of 2006 (Public Resources Code Section 75001 et seq.).

Capacity Building - Actions or support provided to entities that have need to develop specific skills or competencies or to generally improve performance or organizational/community effectiveness.

Capital Improvement Projects - Projects that utilize grant funds for acquisition of land or site improvement/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, refer to: <http://ceres.ca.gov/ceqa/>.

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

Collaborative Process - Willing 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).

Conservation Easement - Any limitation in a deed, will or other instrument in the form of an easement, restriction, covenant or condition which is or has been executed by or on behalf of the owner of the land subject to such easement and is binding upon the successive owners of such land, and the purpose of which is to retain land predominantly in its natural, scenic, historical, agricultural, forested or open-space condition. (Civil Code Section 815.1)

Curriculum - The set of courses or specific learning programs available at a school or university.

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

Design/Permit - Preliminary project planning or identification of methodologies or processes to achieve project goals, and the process of obtaining any regulatory approvals or permits necessary from appropriate governmental agencies in order to conduct the work of the project.

Easement - An interest in land entitling the holder thereof to a limited use or enjoyment of the land in which the interest exists, or to restrict the use or enjoyment of the land by the owner of the fee title.

Eligible Costs – Expenses incurred by the grantee during the agreement 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.

Event/Program - A planned, coordinated activity or group of activities designed for a specific audience to achieve a specific goal.

Executive Officer - The person appointed the manager of the SNC.

Fair Market Value - The value placed upon property as supported by an appraisal that has been reviewed and approved by the California Department of General Services or other designated authority.

Fee Title - Land ownership that gives an owner maximum interest in the land and that entitles the owner to use the property consistent with federal, state and local laws and ordinances.

Fiscal Sponsor – An organization that is eligible to receive SNC Proposition 84 grants and is willing to assume fiscal responsibility for a grant project, although another entity would carry out the grant scope of work.

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

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 within the agreement performance period by the grantee.

Grant Agreement Performance Period – The period of time during which the eligible costs may be incurred under the grant, and in which the work described in the grant scope must be completed.

Grant Agreement Term – The period of time that includes the agreement performance period, plus time for all work to be billed and paid by the state. This period is the same as the beginning and ending dates of the agreement.

Grantee – An entity that has an agreement 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.

Historical Resource – Includes, but is not limited to, any building, structure, site, area, place, artifact, or collection of artifacts that is historically or archaeologically significant from a statewide perspective.

Infrastructure Development/Improvement - The physical improvement of real property,

including the construction of facilities or structures (such as bridges, trails, culverts, buildings, etc.).

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.

Monitoring/Research - To search, observe or record an operation or condition with tools that have no effect upon the operation or condition.

Natural Resource Protection - Those actions necessary to prevent harm or damage to rivers, lakes, and streams, their watersheds and associated land, water, and other natural resources, or those actions necessary to allow the continued use and enjoyment of property or natural resources and includes acquisition, restoration, preservation and education.

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

[www.epa.gov./compliance/basics/nepa.html](http://www.epa.gov./compliance/basics/nepa.html)

Nonprofit Organization - A private, nonprofit organization that qualifies for exempt status under Section 501(c)(3) of Title 26 of the United States Code.

Other Sources of Funds - Cash or in-kind contributions necessary or used to complete the acquisition or 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 or qualitative metric used by the SNC to track progress toward project goals and desired outcomes.

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

Planning - The act or process of creating a plan.

Pre-Project Due Diligence - The analysis necessary to identify all aspects influencing a project and determine the risks associated with a project.

Preservation - Rehabilitation, stabilization, restoration, development, and reconstruction, or any combination of those activities.

Project – The work to be accomplished with grant funds.

Project Coordinator – An employee of the SNC who acts as a liaison with the applicants or grantees and administers grant funds, ensuring compliance with guidelines and the grant agreement.

Proposition 84 - See Bond.

Public Agencies – Any city, county, district, or joint powers authority; State agency; public university; or federal agency.

Region – The Sierra Nevada Region as defined in Public Resources Code Section 33302 (f).

Region-wide – Providing benefits that affect 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 acquisition, development, restoration, preservation or interpretation.

Restoration - Activities that initiate, accelerate or return the components and processes of a damaged site to a previous historical state, a contemporary standard or a desired future condition including, but not limited to, projects for the control of erosion, the control and elimination of exotic species, fencing out threats to existing or restored natural resources, road elimination, and other plant and wildlife habitat improvement.

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

SNC – Sierra Nevada Conservancy.

Stewardship Plan - A plan to provide ongoing implementation and management associated with the acquisition of a conservation easement or site improvement/restoration project.

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

Subgrantee – An entity that enters into a contractual or grantor/grantee relationship with another entity receiving a block grant from the SNC for the purpose of carrying out a portion of the scope of work of the block grant.

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.

Trail – A thoroughfare or track for pedestrian (including assistive mobility devices), skating or skateboarding, equestrian, skiing, canoeing, kayaking, bicycling or off-highway vehicle activities.

Tribal Organization – An 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 on pages 52829 to 52835, inclusive, of Number 250 of Volume 53 (December 29, 1988) of the Federal Register, as that list may be updated or amended from time to time.

Working Landscape(s) - Lands producing goods and commodities from the natural environment (such as farms, ranches, and forests in timber production). For many communities, these lands are an important part of the local economy, culture, and social fabric.

Working Landscape Preservation - Actions that preserve activities occurring on ranches, farms, and forestlands that result in sustainable economic, ecological, and social benefits to communities, people, and their environments.

## **APPENDIX C**

### **Grants Guidelines**

#### **Performance Measures**

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 SNC achieving its programmatic goals.

All grantees are required to report on performance measures for their projects. Certain information will be asked of all projects. This includes data related to four quantitative performance measures if applicable to the project:

- Number of People Reached
- Dollar Value of Resources Leveraged for the Sierra Nevada
- Number and Type of Jobs Created
- Number of New, Improved or Preserved Economic Activities

In addition to the information that will be asked of all projects, grantees will report on performance measures (usually one to three) related to their specific project.

#### **Submitting Performance Measures in the Grant Application**

You must propose project-specific measures as part of your grant application. Generally, you will select these measures from the pre-approved list developed by the SNC. However, you also have the option of proposing a different measure in your application if you believe it would be more appropriate for your project. Final Performance Measures will be determined in consultation with SNC staff, but it is highly recommended that the applicant work with SNC staff during the pre-application process to concur on the appropriate Performance Measures prior to application submission.

The performance measures you select should be directly applicable to your project's goals, outcomes, and deliverables. Approved measures become part of a grantee's final grant agreement.

The four Performance Measures listed above that are required of all projects should be addressed in the grant application as to if and how they are applicable to the project.

The applicant is not expected to conjecture the quantitative outcomes of the Performance Measures in the grant application, but merely to list and discuss their applicability.

## Selecting Project-Specific Performance Measures

1. You should begin the process of selecting project-specific performance measures by referring back to the project category you selected for your project. The table on the following page provides a list of the recommended measures that are most likely to be relevant for projects in each category. A description of all of the measures follows the table. Examine your project purpose, goals, desired outcomes, and deliverables (from your project general description). Select measures that will help you determine whether and how well these have been achieved. (If you are unclear on which measure/s to select or have questions, please contact SNC staff.)
2. Review your project workplan and budget to ensure you have factored in the time and cost to gather and report performance measure-related information. For each Performance Measure, a detailed description of information gathering and reporting requirements is provided on the SNC website:  
[http://www.sierranevada.ca.gov/grants\\_pm.html](http://www.sierranevada.ca.gov/grants_pm.html)
3. You may find that the performance measures listed below are not relevant to your project. SNC encourages the development of performance measures most appropriate for your project. Development of new measures should be done in consultation with SNC staff, because it requires their approval. When proposing a new performance measure, keep in mind that the measure should directly relate to a specific project goal, outcome, or deliverable. Consider performance measures that can be tracked using accepted methods to ensure that your data will be consistent and defensible. For any new performance measures proposed for your project, provide the following information:
  - Clear definition
  - Data collection method(s)
  - Data sources
  - Target values.

## Reporting Performance Measures Outcomes in the Progress and Final Reports

Grantees must report on all Performance Measures that are incorporated into the grant agreement in the Progress Reports (when interim measurement is applicable) and the Final Report, in accordance with the Detailed Performance Measures descriptions.

Grantees are also required to provide qualitative, or narrative, information in their final project reports as requested on the Final Report form.

## Performance Measures by Project Category

All Grants

<b>A. Common to All Categories</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Number of People Reached</li> <li>2. Dollar Value of Resources Leveraged for the Sierra Nevada</li> <li>3. Number and Type of Jobs Created</li> <li>4. Number of New, Improved, or Preserved Economic Activities</li> </ol>
<b>B. Common to Site Improvement &amp; Acquisition Categories</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. Kilowatts of Renewable Energy Production Capacity Maintained or Created</li> <li>6. Linear Feet of Stream Bank Protected or Restored</li> <li>7. Number of New Recreation Access Points</li> <li>8. Number of Special Significance Sites Protected or Preserved</li> <li>9. Tons of Carbon Sequestered or Emissions Avoided</li> <li>10. Measurable Changes in Knowledge or Behavior</li> </ol>
<b>C. Acquisition Only</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>11. Acres of Land Conserved</li> </ol>
<b>D. Site Improvement Only</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>12. Acre Feet of Water Supply Conserved or Enhanced</li> <li>13. Acres of Land Improved or Restored</li> <li>14. Acre Feet Per Annum of Streamflow Improved</li> <li>15. Feet of Trail/Path Length Constructed or Improved</li> <li>16. Mass of Pollutants Reduced Per Year</li> </ol>
<b>E. Pre-Project Planning</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>17. Number of Collaboratively Developed Plans and Assessments</li> <li>18. Percent of Pre-Project and Planning Efforts Resulting in Project Implementation</li> <li>10. Measurable Changes in Knowledge or Behavior</li> </ol>

### Performance Measure Descriptions

The following Performance Measures (PMs) have been developed to meet SNC's initial needs as it launches its programs and provides initial grant funding for several project types. These PMs, along with a brief description of each, are listed below in five broad categories: Performance Measures for All Projects, Performance Measures Common to Site Improvement and Acquisition Projects, Performance Measures for Acquisition Projects, Performance Measures for Site Improvement Projects, and Performance Measures for Pre-Project Planning Projects.

## **A. Performance Measures for All Categories**

### **1. Number of People Reached**

Number of People Reached measures progress of information-sharing and education efforts and inclusiveness of other project efforts such as plan development.

### **2. Dollar Value of Resources Leveraged for the Sierra Nevada**

The Dollar Value of Resources Leveraged provides a measure of the additional resources contributed to SNC funded projects by grantees and other partners. The total value is based on other funds provided by external sources, valuation of volunteer hours, and the value of in-kind contributions made by a project.

### **3. Number and Type of Jobs Created**

Number and Type of Jobs Created provides an accounting of the full-time equivalent jobs created by SNC-funded activities. Information provided should describe whether the job is expected to be temporary or long-term.

### **4. Number of New, Improved, or Preserved Economic Activities**

New, Improved, or Preserved Economic Activities measures the types, quantities, and, where appropriate, estimated dollar values of new, improved, or preserved activities, products, and services resulting from the project.

## **B. Performance Measures Common to Site Improvement and Acquisition Projects**

### **5. Kilowatts of Renewable Energy Production Capacity Maintained or Created**

The Kilowatts of Renewable Energy Production Capacity maintained or created is based on the California Energy Commission's (CEC's) standards for renewable energy eligibility and includes energy generation capacity from biomass, wind, solar, small hydroelectric and other qualifying sources.

### **6. Linear Feet of Stream Bank Protected or Restored**

Linear Feet of Stream Bank Protected or Restored provides a measure of a project's contribution to water quality, riparian property values, habitat, and stream connectivity. Information provided should indicate whether the stream bank is being protected or restored.

### **7. Number of New Recreation Access Points**

Number of New Recreation Access Points measures improvements in recreation access by: type of access points, recreation type, and change in capacity.

### **8. Number of Special Significance Sites Protected or Preserved**

Number of Special Significance Sites Protected or Preserved records the total number of sites with important cultural or natural features that are protected from development or other adverse impacts.

**9. Tons of Carbon Sequestered or Emissions Avoided**

Tons of Carbon Sequestered or Emissions Avoided demonstrates the value of Sierra ecosystem resources in reducing the effects of climate change. Potential project types can include conservation forest management, renewable energy generation, and industrial process improvements. The carbon reductions included in this performance measure will be informed by and linked, as appropriate, to standard approaches and protocols such as those published by the California Climate Action Registry.

**10. Measurable Changes in Knowledge or Behavior**

Measurable Change in Knowledge or Behavior tracks the effects of educational and interpretive efforts to improve appreciation for and stewardship of Sierra Nevada resources. Examples of behavioral change include increased Firewise landscaping and removal of noxious weeds on private property. Examples of change in knowledge include improved student understanding of climate change and increased public acceptance of prescribed fire.

**C. Performance Measures for Acquisition Projects**

**11. Acres of Land Conserved**

Acres of Land Conserved includes areas that have been conserved through acquisition, including easements. This performance measure provides an accounting of the extent of landscape and natural resources conserved by SNC activities. Information provided should include the method of conservation (acquisition or easement) and the primary purpose of conservation (recreation, open space, working landscapes, etc).

**D. Performance Measures for Site Improvement Projects**

**12. Acre Feet of Water Supply Conserved or Enhanced**

Acre Feet of Water Supply Conserved or Enhanced measures the benefits of water conservation and efficiency projects and particular restoration efforts that impact timing of flows. These actions benefit both local residents and the people of California who receive their water supply from the Sierra Nevada. Project activities can include: meadow restoration to enhance runoff timing or incentive programs such as converting to drip irrigation to reduce demand.

**13. Acres of Land Improved or Restored**

Acres of Land Improved or Restored tracks efforts to reduce the risk of natural disasters, such as catastrophic wildfire, and improve natural resource conditions, such as site productivity and wildlife habitat, through site improvement. Information provided should identify whether the acres protected have been categorized by importance or priority rating through another agency or program, such as acres of critical habitat, or acres in moderate, high and very high fire hazard areas, as delineated by the CALFIRE Fire Hazard Severity Zoning Map.

**14. Acre-Feet per Annum of Streamflow Improved**

Acre-Feet per Annum of Streamflow Improved measures the changes in flow conditions in a given stream or river resulting from a project. This performance measure directly addresses improving water quality and habitat, since flow can be a controlling driver in these issues. Subcategories include: water conservation or efficiency projects dedicating conserved water to instream flows, actions that result in changes in management, short-term leases of water for instream flows, and permanent transfers through acquisition of a water right.

**15. Feet of Trail/Path Length Constructed or Improved**

The Feet of Trail/Path Length Constructed or Improved incorporates paved and unpaved multi-use urban, hiking, OHV, equestrian and other trails and paths. Information provided should identify the length, type of trail/path and type of use.

**16. Mass of Pollutants Reduced Per Year**

The Mass of Pollutants Reduced Per Year indicates the pollutant reduction effectiveness of restoration, water quality, and air quality projects. Current projects focus on reducing sediment and mercury pollution; however, additional pollutants may be targeted in future projects. Information provided should identify the pollutant type/s to be reduced and the amount of reduction.

**E. Performance Measures for Pre-Project Planning Projects**

**17. Number of Collaboratively Developed Plans and Assessments**

The Number of Collaboratively Developed Plans and Assessments is a measure that may be relevant for a wide variety of projects. Plans and assessments help communities plan for resource use, qualify for targeted funding, and support understanding of conditions and management options. Examples of anticipated subjects include fire protection, water resources, land use, tourism development, habitat surveys and many more.

**18. Percent of Pre-Project and Planning Efforts Resulting in Project Implementation**

Percent of Pre-project and Planning Efforts Implemented measures progress in moving SNC-funded projects from initial stages of collaboration and planning to on-the-ground actions and acquisitions.

**19. Measurable Changes in Knowledge or Behavior**

Measurable Change in Knowledge or Behavior tracks the effects of educational and interpretive efforts to improve appreciation for and stewardship of Sierra Nevada resources. Examples of behavioral change include increased Firewise landscaping and removal of noxious weeds on private property. Examples of change in knowledge include improved student understanding of climate change and increased public acceptance of prescribed fire.

## **APPENDIX D**

### California Environmental Quality Act Compliance for Sierra Nevada Conservancy Grants

#### **Overview**

The Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) is a state agency and therefore SNC actions are subject to all provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). This means that when the SNC is initiating or making discretionary decisions such as providing financial support to entities for projects, we must ensure that project activities are undertaken in compliance with CEQA.

**Projects** are defined by CEQA as: The whole of an action that has potential for resulting in either a direct physical change in the environment, or a reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment, and specifically related to the SNC grant program:

An activity which is funded, in whole or in part, through public agency contracts, **grants**, subsidies, loans, or other assistance from a public agency.

For more information about **CEQA**, you may visit the following Web site:  
<http://ceres.ca.gov/ceqa/index.html>

#### **Completion of appropriate documentation**

***Applicants are strongly urged to consult with SNC staff prior to initiating the application process to determine how best to meet the CEQA requirements. Failing to do so may result in inadequate documentation and ultimately in the project being deemed ineligible.***

For activities that meet the CEQA definition of a project, the appropriate documentation must be completed and adopted or certified by a California local or state agency (“Lead Agency”). The Lead Agency for environmental documentation must determine whether or not the project will have a significant potential impact on the environment. For most grant authorizations, SNC will act as a “Responsible Agency”: authorizing grant funding for projects that have already been approved by a Lead Agency.

Under specific circumstances, SNC will act as a Lead Agency, if the project meets the definition of being categorically or statutorily exempt from CEQA. This opportunity may exist for project applicants that are not state or local agencies.

All documentation for CEQA compliance is required at the time of application.

Completion of CEQA documents cannot be made a “condition” of grant approval.

## **Categories of Proposed Projects**

Proposed projects will fall into one of the following four CEQA categories:

### ➤ **Not a Project per CEQA**

Upon receiving a grant application or pre-application consultation request, SNC must evaluate whether or not the activity being proposed is defined as a project for CEQA purposes. If the proposal does not meet the CEQA definition of a project, no documentation is required and the applicant should note that this is the case in the application (examples might include some planning activities).

### ➤ **Categorical and Statutory Exemptions**

Specific types of activities have been identified as exempt from environmental analysis under CEQA. All projects funded by the SNC require the filing of a Notice of Exemption for categorically or statutorily exempt projects.

Requirements for projects in this category differ by applicant type, as follows:

- o State or local agencies authorized to certify CEQA documents are required to submit the appropriate, completed CEQA documents, including a filed Notice of Exemption, with the application
- o For all other applicants (non-profit organizations, federal agencies, tribal entities), the SNC *may* act as lead agency in the CEQA process and *maybe* able to file a Notice of Exemption for a project – but applicants must consult with SNC staff in advance to determine whether the SNC will act as lead agency.

### ➤ **Negative Declaration and Mitigated Negative Declaration**

An Initial Study must be completed for projects which are not categorically or statutorily exempt. If the Initial Study concludes that a project will not have a significant impact on the environment, a Negative Declaration may be prepared and adopted by the Lead Agency. When impacts are identified and may be alleviated through mitigation measures during project implementation, a Mitigated Negative Declaration may be prepared and adopted by the Lead Agency. Noticing, Preparation, and Public review for these documents may require several months to complete. Documentation of completed actions must be provided with application

### ➤ **Environmental Impact Report**

If it is determined through an Initial Study that a project may result in a potential significant impact to the environment, an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) is required. Noticing, Preparation, and Public review for an EIR may require up to two years for completion. Documentation of completed actions must be provided with application.

### **Consistency with National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)**

Projects that are located on Federally Managed Lands must comply with both NEPA and CEQA requirements. If the federal agency has found that the project is a categorical exclusion under NEPA, the signed Decision Notice must be submitted with the application. If the environmental impacts of the project are analyzed in an Environmental Assessment or Environmental Impact Statement, a completed FONSI or Record of Decision must be submitted at the time of application along with the approved document. The SNC may act as the Responsible Agency under these circumstances **if the document complies with the provisions of the comparable CEQA document.** However, in some instances the NEPA process may not adequately meet CEQA requirements. Federal agencies or those conducting activities on federal lands are strongly encouraged to coordinate with a California public agency on CEQA compliance issues.

### **Applicant Responsibilities**

Grant Applicants are responsible for ensuring that CEQA compliance requirements are met and ready for SNC Board approval at the time of application. The responsibilities of the applicant vary depending on the type of entity and project.