

Background

The Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) was allocated \$54 million from the Proposition 84, Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Bond Act of 2006, passed by the voters in 2006.

At its June 2012 meeting, the SNC Board approved the 2012-13 Grant Guidelines for the final competitive grant cycle to support the Preservation of Ranches and Agricultural Lands (Ranches and AgLands) grant program as identified in the SNC's Strategic Plan. The Board had previously directed that \$5 million of the remaining dollars available to the SNC through Proposition 84 would be used to support this area of focus. The Grant Guidelines and accompanying Grant Application Packet were released on June 18, 2012, opening the grant round and requesting grant project proposals in the form of pre-applications.

Current Status

SNC received 62 full applications totaling \$11,112,362.75 in funding requests. Of those, 44 (71%) are for Category 1 projects (site improvement or conservation easement acquisitions) and 18 (29%) are for Category 2 (pre-project activities leading to an eligible project). There are 32 projects requesting \$6.4 million for site improvement projects and 12 projects requesting approximately \$3.5 million for conservation easement acquisitions. Pre-project planning activities have been proposed for the remaining 18 projects, requesting \$1.1 million.

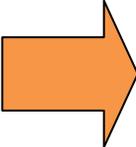
The Project breakdown by Subregion is noted below:

2012-13 Ranches and AgLands Grant Program Full Applications Received				
By Subregion		% of Projects		% of Funding
Central	16	26%	\$2,661,840.00	24%
North	13	21%	\$2,588,267.41	23%
North Central	10	16%	\$1,985,295.33	18%
South	8	13%	\$1,402,447.01	13%
South Central	8	13%	\$1,232,300.00	11%
East	3	5%	\$537,482.00	5%
Multiple Subregions	4	6%	\$704,731.00	6%

Next Steps

SNC Staff is currently working in conjunction with external evaluation teams to review all full applications and to conduct project site visits, as appropriate. These teams are evaluating projects based on the quality of their proposal as well as compliance with Proposition 84. A separate team is also evaluating each project for California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) compliance. Projects that are identified as being unable to comply with CEQA will be addressed early in the full application review process.

The full schedule for this grant cycle is as follows:

GRANT PROGRAM ELEMENTS	Target Date or Duration
RELEASE PRESERVATION OF RANCHES AND AGRICULTURAL LANDS GUIDELINES AND GAPS – OPEN RFP	6/18/2012
PRE-APPLICATION DEVELOPMENT PERIOD: SNC staff will be available to work with applicants on preparation of pre-applications to be submitted during this period.	6/18/2012-7/13/2012
PRE-APPLICATION SUBMISSION DEADLINE: If an applicant wishes to receive SNC grant funding, they must submit a pre-application and the associated attachments no later than 5:00 pm on this date.	7/13/2012
PRE-APPLICATION REVIEW PERIOD: SNC will review pre-applications for eligibility (including focus area alignment) and completeness. Invitations to submit a full application may occur any time after the pre-application has been reviewed, but no later than close of business 8/13/2012.	7/16/2012-8/13/2012
FULL APPLICATION DEVELOPMENT PERIOD: Applicants who receive an invitation to submit a full application should work with SNC staff to develop and refine their full application during this period.	8/15/2012-10/19/2012
FULL APPLICATION SUBMISSION DEADLINE – CLOSE RFP: All elements of a full application must be complete and submitted by COB on this date.	10/22/2012
 FULL APPLICATION REVIEW: SNC staff and technical evaluators will evaluate all complete applications, resulting in a score up to 100 points. Consultation with the Board Subregional committees, as well as communication with affected local agencies will occur during this period.	10/22/2012-1/13/2013
FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS TO SNC BOARD: Staff will provide recommendations based on the evaluation, including consideration of geographic distribution of projects.	3/7/2013

For this round, as with the last round, staff will provide recommendations to Board subcommittees via email, and be prepared to respond to any comments/concerns raised.

Recommendation

This is an informational item only; no formal action is needed by the Board at this time, although Board members are encouraged to share their thoughts and comments.