

Background

The Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) was allocated \$54 million in bond funds through Proposition 84, passed by the voters in 2006. Approximately \$50 million of this amount was available for grant awards to eligible nonprofit organizations, public agencies and federally recognized tribal organizations. The SNC has conducted six grant rounds funding nearly 300 projects throughout the Sierra Nevada Region to date. All available funding has been awarded, however a number of projects have not gone forward leaving funds of approximately \$2.6 million available for future awards.

At its March 2013 meeting, the SNC Board directed staff to develop the Grant Guidelines for the FY 2013-14 grant round to address needs in the focus areas of Healthy Forests and Abandoned Mine Lands as identified in the Strategic Plan and 2013-14 Action Plan. The Board also directed that the remaining Proposition 84 funds be awarded through this final grant round, and appointed a Board committee of Bob Kirkwood and Tom Wheeler to assist staff in reviewing the final Draft Grant Guidelines and public comment. Staff released the Draft Grant Guidelines for public review and comment from April 5 through April 26, 2013. Staff has reviewed the Draft Grant Guidelines and all public comment received with the Board committee.

Current Status

The final Draft Proposition 84 FY 2013-14 Grant Guidelines are included as [Attachment A](#) to this staff report. These proposed Grant Guidelines include all revisions made as the result of additional staff analysis and Board and public input. If approved, the final grant round for 2013-14 will open with the release of the Grant Guidelines in June. A companion Grant Application Packet (GAP) with necessary forms and instructions will also be released at that time.

The final Draft Grant Guidelines include several changes compared to previous SNC Proposition 84 Grant Guidelines. Following is a list of the more substantive changes included in this year's final Draft Grant Guidelines:

- Eligible projects have been more narrowly defined to the areas of forest health and abandoned mine lands remediation.
- Conservation Easements and Fee Title Acquisition and related Pre-Project work are not eligible.
- The process of developing applications will be more collaborative between SNC Staff and project proponents.
- While all projects will be evaluated and scored they will not be directly compared to other projects being considered at that time.
- Deadlines have been removed from the process as the grant round will last until the available funds have been expended.

The SNC received five public comments and a number of non-substantive changes to the Grant Guidelines were made as a result. Staff is not recommending changes suggested to further expand the focus areas to include a broader range of projects,

given the direction provided to staff at previous meetings. A detailed list of all of the comments received during the public review period and their disposition is provided in [Attachment B](#).

Next Steps

Next steps include making any final revisions to the Draft Grant Guidelines based on any Board direction received at this meeting, completing the GAP, and initiating this final SNC Proposition 84 grant round through the public release of the final Grant Guidelines and GAP. Staff will bring recommended grant proposals to the Board on an ongoing basis as projects have been developed and evaluated.

Recommendation

Staff recommends the Board approve the Sierra Nevada Conservancy Proposition 84 FY 2013-14 Grant Guidelines, including any changes based on Board direction, and direct staff to take the necessary actions to implement the FY 2013-14 Sierra Nevada Conservancy Grant Program.