

STATE COASTAL CONSERVANCY

PROPOSITION 1 PROPOSAL SOLICITATION



Grants Funded by the Water Quality, Supply,
and Infrastructure Improvement Act of 2014

*Proposals for urban greening projects in
Los Angeles County*

Applications due June 30, 2016

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I. Introduction

A. State Coastal Conservancy's Proposition 1 Grants

The State Coastal Conservancy (“Conservancy”) is a state agency, established in 1976, to work proactively with local communities to implement multi-benefit projects that protect and enhance coastal resources. The Conservancy works along the entire length of California’s coast, within the watersheds of rivers and streams that extend inland from the coast, and throughout the nine-county San Francisco Bay Area.

The Water Quality, Supply, and Infrastructure Improvement Act of 2014 (“Proposition 1”) was approved by voters in November 2014. Proposition 1 is codified as Division 26.7 of the Water Code. The purposes of Proposition 1 include generating funding to address water quality, water supply and watershed protection and restoration. Chapter 6 of Proposition 1 allocates \$100.5 million to the Conservancy for competitive grants for multi-benefit ecosystem and watershed protection and restoration projects, Water Code Section 79731(j).

The Conservancy has identified four priorities for Proposition 1 expenditures. The four priorities project types include: water sustainability improvements, anadromous fish habitat enhancement, wetland restoration and urban greening.

B. Solicitation Schedule

The Conservancy anticipates holding four Proposition 1 solicitations each year. The schedule for the Proposition 1 solicitations is posted on our website. The schedule for this grant round is as follows:

Solicitation Released	May 1, 2016
Webinar	May 13, 2016 10 am
Proposals due	June 30, 2016
Evaluation	July- Aug 2016
Board Meeting	Fall or Winter 2016

If you want to attend the informational webinar email an rsvp to grants@scc.ca.gov.

All Proposition 1 grant will be awarded at a Coastal Conservancy board meeting. The specific meeting when a grant will be considered will depend on project readiness and staff capacity.

C. Grant Application

Applicants must submit a [grant application cover page](#), a [grant application narrative](#), a [Conservation Corps Consultation Review Document](#) and a completed [Nonprofit Organization Pre-Award Questionnaire](#) (nonprofit applicants only). All of these materials are posted on the Conservancy’s webpage (scc.ca.gov).

II. Solicitation Priorities

The Conservancy adopted a Strategic Plan Update to identify specific priorities for the expenditure of Proposition 1 funding. The Strategic Plan update calls for the prioritization of multi-benefit projects for Proposition 1 grants, consistent with the language of the bond. Most state agencies have a statewide jurisdiction, but a relatively focused mission. The Coastal Conservancy has a more focused jurisdiction (about 33% of the state and 75% of its population) but a broad mission, including agricultural conservation, recreation, ecological conservation and climate change adaptation. This structure positions the Conservancy well to implement multi-benefit projects.

Based on the priority issues within our jurisdiction, reviewing existing state plans, and screening for projects that achieve multiple benefits, serve disadvantaged communities, and result in quantifiable outcomes, the Conservancy identified four priorities for Proposition 1 expenditures. More detailed analysis of the overlap of these criteria is provided in the Strategic Plan update. The four priorities are:

- Water Sustainability
- Protect and Enhance Anadromous Fish Habitat
- Wetland Restoration
- Urban Greening

A. Multi-Benefit Urban Greening Projects

This grant round is focused on **Urban Greening projects in Los Angeles County**. These are projects that provide at least two of the following benefits: increase groundwater recharge, reduce runoff, improve water quality, improve urban watershed health, create public green-space, or expand urban forests.

In many urban areas, there are opportunities to create greener, more environmentally sustainable and livable communities by creating new parks, improving existing parks and green spaces, and planting trees. If designed correctly, these projects can infiltrate stormwater, improve groundwater recharge, and improve water quality. Projects may also provide additional benefits such as reducing urban heat island effects, improving air quality, increasing walkability and increasing neighborhood safety.

The Conservancy has helped plan and construct several multi-benefit urban greening projects in many coastal cities. With Proposition 1 funds the Conservancy will implement more projects of this type that incorporate many green infrastructure elements, including water retention and storage, and shade trees for heat relief.

Urban greening projects advance several of the purposes of Chapter 6, including implementing watershed adaptation projects to reduce the impacts of climate change on communities, protecting urban watershed health and implementing urban river greenways. These projects implement Actions #2 and #6 of the California Water Action Plan by increasing integrated water management across all levels of government and increasing groundwater storage. The health section of the Safeguarding California Plan specifically identifies urban greening as a strategy to reduce the impacts of extreme heat events and urban greening projects implement Goals 2, 5, 7 and 11 of the Conservancy's Strategic Plan.

B. Priority for Projects that Benefit Disadvantaged Communities

Proposition 1 defines a disadvantaged community as “a community with an annual median household income that is less than 80 percent of the statewide annual median household income.” (CA Water Code Section 79505.5.) Chapter 6 of Proposition 1 does not require that a specific portion of funding go to disadvantaged communities. However, the Conservancy will strive to ensure that a significant portion of its Proposition 1 funding benefit these communities.

The Department of Water Resources has developed an online [map viewer](#) which enables the public to see the boundaries of the disadvantaged communities, based on census data including the American Community Survey. Communities are defined at different geographic scales, including county, census tract and census place.

C. Projects that Promote and Implement State Plans and Policies

Priority will be given to projects that implement state plans and policies. The Conservancy’s project selection criteria require that all Conservancy projects be consistent with statewide plans and priorities, see Section III.C below. Proposition 1 requires that projects be consistent with the goals identified in the California Water Action Plan. Links to [key plans](#) are provided on the Conservancy’s website.

D. Projects with Matching Funds

The Conservancy will award additional points to applicants with significant matching funds from non-state sources. The amount of leveraged funding will be specifically identified in every staff recommendation for potential approval by the Conservancy Board. The Conservancy will provide a summary of the total leverage of Conservancy funds from all its grant programs in an annual financial report to the Conservancy Board.

III. Eligibility and Required Criteria

A. Eligible Grantees

Eligible applicants for Proposition 1 grant funding from the Conservancy are:

- Public agencies as defined in Proposition 1: any state agency or department, special district, joint powers authority, city, county, city and county, or other political subdivision of the state.
- Any private, nonprofit organization that qualifies under Section 501(c) (3) of the United States Internal Revenue Code, and whose purposes are consistent with the Conservancy’s enabling legislation (Division 21 of the Public Resources Code).
- Indian Tribes that are either federally recognized or listed on the Native Heritage Commission’s California Tribal Consultation List.
- Public utilities and mutual water companies; projects proposed by this type of applicant must have a clear and definite public purpose and must benefit the customers of the water system and not the investors. Additional eligibility requirements apply to any eligible grantee that is also

an urban water supplier or an agricultural water supplier, as set forth in Proposition 1, Water Code Section 79712(b).

B. Project Eligibility

To be eligible for this round of Proposition 1 funding, projects must be urban greening projects in Los Angeles County that advance some of the purposes of Chapter 6 of Proposition 1.

Proposition 1 funds must be spent consistent with the General Obligation Bond Law, Government Code Section 16727. In general, this means projects must entail the construction or acquisition of capital assets and/or activities that are incidentally but directly related to construction or acquisition, such as planning, design and engineering.

Proposition 1 contains additional provisions that may make some projects ineligible, these include:

- All projects funded by Proposition 1 must be consistent with the Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act (Division 7 of the Water Code) and the State's [five-year infrastructure plan](#) prepared pursuant to Government Code section 13100.
- Proposition 1 cannot be used to fund acquisitions of land by eminent domain. Water Code Section 79711(g).
- Proposition 1 funds may only be used for projects that will provide benefits or improvements that are greater than required applicable environmental mitigation measures or compliance obligations.
- Land acquisition projects, including acquisition of conservation easements, are eligible if they are consistent with the purposes of Chapter 6 of Proposition 1.
- Proposition 1 funds are appropriated to the Conservancy with a maximum of five years for expenditure. Projects must be ready to start work and able to be completed within a maximum of five years.

C. Storm Water Resource Plans

For storm water capture projects to be eligible for Prop 1 funding, a local public agency must have a Storm Water Resource Plan certified by the State Water Resource Control Board (State Board). The State Board has adopted [guidelines](#) for development of Storm Water Resource Plans.

A project is a storm water capture project if its primary purpose is to intercept, store, manage, and use storm water and dry weather runoff, thereby reducing the volume of runoff exiting a site.

D. Conservancy Required Project Selection Criteria

The Conservancy has adopted [Project Selection Criteria](#), last updated in October 2014, which set forth the evaluation criteria that the Conservancy uses for all of its grant programs. To be eligible for Conservancy funding, a project must meet the Conservancy's required project selection criteria:

- **Promotion of the Conservancy's statutory programs and purposes** (Division 21 of the Public Resources Code);
- **Consistency with purposes of the funding source;**

- **Promotion and implementation of state plans and policies** (specific plans and policies and the specific goals or objectives within those plans and policies that would be furthered by the project);
- **Support from the public;**
- **Location** (must benefit coastal, ocean resources, or the San Francisco Bay region);
- **Need** (desired project or result will not occur without Conservancy participation);
- **Greater-than-local interest;**
- **Sea level rise vulnerability.** (Consistent with Executive Order S-13-08, for new projects located in areas vulnerable to future sea level rise, planning shall consider a range of sea level rise scenarios in order to assess project vulnerability and, to the extent feasible, reduce expected risks and increase resiliency to sea level rise.)

E. Environmental Documents and Permits

The Conservancy is required to comply with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Grant applicants should consider whether their proposed project will trigger the need for an environmental impact report or negative declaration or whether a CEQA exemption applies. How CEQA applies and the status of CEQA compliance must be addressed in the grant application.

Applicants are strongly encouraged to use expedited or simplified permitting approaches where available and applicable.

F. Project Monitoring and Reporting

All grant applications must include a monitoring and reporting component that explains how the effectiveness of the project will be measured and reported. The monitoring and reporting component will vary depending on the nature of the project. If the project involves development of a CEQA document the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program may be submitted for consideration as the approved project monitoring and reporting template. The grant application evaluation will assess the robustness of the proposed monitoring program. In addition, Conservancy staff will work with grantees to develop appropriate monitoring and reporting templates and procedures.

IV. Grant Application Process and Timeline

A. Project Solicitation Period

The Proposals Solicitation period for this round of funding will be from May 1st until June 30, 2016. Grant applications must be submitted during the solicitation period.

Grant applications must be received by 5pm on June 30, 2016.

The Conservancy will hold one informational webinar on May 13th at 10 am. If you are interested in attending this webinar, please email grants@scc.ca.gov.

The [Conservancy's Prop 1 grant application](#) materials are posted on the Conservancy's website.

B. Pre-Proposal Consultation

Applicants are strongly encouraged to consult with Conservancy staff during the project solicitation period, prior to submitting their applications. Pre-proposal consultation will be available to any potential applicant but will not be required. Conservancy staff will be available to discuss projects and proposal-related questions, they will not be able to review full proposals before they are submitted.

Please contact Joan Cardellino: joan.cardellino@scc.ca.gov, 510-286-4093

C. Grant Application

The grant application form and instructions for completing it are posted on the Conservancy's website. Completed applications should be emailed to grants@scc.ca.gov. If you are unable to email your application, you may send the electronic files on a CD or other common electronic storage device. Mail the files to: State Coastal Conservancy - 1330 Broadway, Suite 1300 - Oakland, CA 94612.

All information that you submit is subject to the unqualified and unconditional right of the Conservancy to use, reproduce, publish, or display, free of charge. Please indicate if crediting is requested for any of the photos and/or maps.

A complete application will consist of the following files/documents:

- Grant Application Cover Page (.pdf)
- Grant application narrative (in Microsoft word or rtf format), includes:
 - o project description
 - o preliminary budget and schedule
 - o Prop 1 questions
- Project maps and design plans and photos (in one pdf file, 10 MB maximum size)
- Conservation Corps Consultation Review Document signed by the Corps
- For Nonprofit Organizations, please submit completed [Nonprofit Organization Pre-Award Questionnaire](#)

The application cover sheet requires the latitude and longitude of the project. This is easily obtained by opening Google Maps and right clicking on the project location. The cover sheet also asks whether the project is located in a Disadvantaged Community. This information can be obtained from [DWR's mapping site](#).

The application requires the following additional information:

1. **Project Description** – Provide a clear, detailed description of the project proposed for Conservancy funding. The project description should include the following sections:
 - a. **Need for the project.** Describe the specific problems, issues, or unserved needs the project will address.
 - b. **Goals and objectives.** The goals and objectives should clearly define the expected outcomes and benefits of the project.

- c. **Project Description.** A brief description of what the project will accomplish and the specific work that will be done.
 - d. **Site Description.** Describe the project site or area, including site characteristics that are tied to your project objectives (i.e.: for acquisition of habitat, describe current vegetation assemblages, condition of habitats, known wildlife migration corridors, etc.). When relevant, include ownership and management information.
 - e. **Specific Tasks.** Identify the specific tasks that will be undertaken and the work that will be accomplished for each task.
 - f. **Work Products.** List the specific work products or other deliverables that the project will result in.
 - g. **Measuring Success.** For projects involving restoration, enhancement, construction or land acquisition, describe the plan for monitoring, evaluating and reporting project effectiveness, and implementing adaptive management strategies if necessary. Who will be responsible for funding and implementing ongoing management and monitoring?
2. **Preliminary Budget and Schedule** – The preliminary budget and schedule must include a line item for every task identified in the project description. For each task, applicants should provide the estimated completion date, estimated total cost of the task, amount requested from the Conservancy, and amount that will be provided by other funding sources. The task list in the Preliminary Budget and Schedule must match the task list provided in the project description. Please indicate the source of matching funds included in the budget.
 3. **Project Graphics:** Provide the following project graphics with your application. Project maps and design plans should be combined into one pdf file with a maximum size of 10MB. Project photos should be provided in jpg format.
 - **Regional Map** -- Clearly identify the project’s location in relation to prominent area features and significant natural and recreational resources, including regional trails and protected lands.
 - **Site-scale map** – Show the location of project elements in relation to natural and man-made features on-site or nearby. Any key features discussed in project description should be shown.
 - **Design Plan** – Construction projects should include one or more design drawings or graphics indicating the intended site improvements.
 - **Site Photos** – One or more clear photos of the project site.
 4. **Proposition 1 Supplemental Questions** – These questions are for applicants for Proposition 1 funding to help reviewers determine how well the application meets the evaluation criteria.
 5. **Conservation Corps Consultation** - For implementation projects, applicants must consult with the Conservation Corps. A completed Corps Consultation Review Document, provided in the Grant Application, Appendix A is required to be included in the application.

Applications should be emailed to the Conservancy (grants@scc.ca.gov). If the combined size of all the files is greater than 10 MB, please send files in separate email messages (email messages over 10 MB in size will be rejected by our server).

E. Application Review Period

The Conservancy expects that it will take an average of six months from application submittal to Conservancy board approval and an additional month for execution of the grant agreement.

F. Grant Awards

Grants will be awarded once a project is approved by the Coastal Conservancy Board at a public meeting. Conservancy staff will determine which qualified applications to recommend to the Conservancy Board for funding and the amount of funding, taking into account the project's score relative to other eligible projects, the total amount of funding available for Proposition 1 projects, the urgency of the project relative to other eligible projects, the Conservancy's Strategic Plan, and the application of the Conservancy's Required and Additional Project Selection Criteria.

The Conservancy typically holds five public meetings per calendar year. Each year's meeting schedule is published on the Conservancy's website. The agenda for each public meeting will be published on the Conservancy's website ten days in advance of the meeting. Conservancy staff will prepare a report for each proposed grant presented to the Conservancy Board at a public meeting. The staff report will describe the project and explain how the project is consistent with the Conservancy's enabling legislation, the Conservancy Program Guidelines, the Conservancy's Strategic Plan and the evaluation criteria in these Proposition 1 Grant Program Guidelines.

V. Application Evaluation and Scoring

A. Application Screening

Grant applications will be initially reviewed for completeness. Incomplete grant applications will be returned to the applicant. Grantees may choose to complete the application and resubmit. Conservancy staff will screen complete grant applications to ensure that:

- The project meets at least one of the Chapter 6 Purposes of Proposition 1;
- The project is consistent with the [Conservancy's Strategic Plan](#) and required [project selection criteria](#);
- The project consists of work that is eligible for bond funds under the General Obligation Bond Law;
- The grantee is an eligible entity;
- For implementation projects, the grantee has consulted with the state and local conservation corps and included their services if feasible. Grantees must submit a completed Corps Consultation Review Document.

Applications that do not pass the screening process will not proceed to the scoring process. The Conservancy has discretion to either return the application or assist the applicant with gathering additional information and modifying the proposal to enable the application to pass the screening process.

B. Scoring

Complete grant applications that have passed the screening process will be evaluated and scored using the Evaluation Scoring Criteria set forth below. An application must achieve an average score of 75 or better to qualify for a grant.

Complete applications that have passed the screening process will be reviewed and scored by a minimum of three professionals with relevant expertise. Reviewers may include state and federal agency staff and others with relevant expertise, including consultants and academics. All reviewers other than SCC staff will be required to document that they do not have a conflict of interest in reviewing any proposals. If there is a significant discrepancy in the scoring by the three reviewers, additional reviewers may score the proposal. The average score will be the average of all reviews.

C. Evaluation Scoring Criteria:

Criteria	Points
The extent to which the project achieves one or more of the purposes of Chapter 6 of Proposition 1.	15
The extent to which the application includes a complete, reasonable and well thought out proposed scope of work, budget and schedule.	15
The extent to which the project provides multiple benefits.	10
The extent to which the project benefits a disadvantaged community as defined in the Water Code § 79702(j).	8
The extent to which the project promotes and implements the California Water Action Plan, other state plans and policies, and relevant regional water plans.	8
The extent to which the applicant demonstrates experience successfully implementing similar projects or demonstrates appropriate and necessary partnerships to complete the project.	8
The extent to which the applicant demonstrates that project goals have community support.	8
Whether the project is consistent with best available science.	8
The extent to which the project leverages the resources of private, federal or local funding sources. Projects that have at least 25% matching funds will receive 3 points. Projects with greater than 50% matching funds will receive 5 points.	5
The extent to which the applicant demonstrates a clear and reasonable method for measuring and reporting the effectiveness of the project.	5
The extent to which the project employs new or innovative technology or practices.	5
The extent to which the project will deliver sustainable outcomes in the long-term.	5
	100
Bonus Points	
Matching funds >100%	5

VI. Additional Information

A. Available Funding

The Conservancy received an appropriation of \$15 million of Proposition 1 in the 2015/16 fiscal year. The Conservancy anticipates releasing four solicitations this fiscal year, the amount awarded in each solicitation will depend on the quality of the applications and the needs of the project. The total awarded in FY 2015/16 will not exceed \$15 million.

B. Additional Project Considerations

- Agencies acquiring land may use the Natural Heritage Preservation Tax Credit Act of 2000 (Division 28 of the Public Resources Code. Water Code Section 79711(h)).
- Where appropriate, grantees will be required to provide signage informing the public that the project received Proposition 1 funding. This requirement will be addressed in the grant agreement.
- In administering Proposition 1 funds, the Conservancy will take into account the state's policy that every human being has a right to "safe, clean, affordable, and accessible water adequate for human consumption, cooking, and sanitary purposes" (Water Code Sec. 106.3).

C. Typical Grant Agreement Terms

Once the Conservancy has approved a grant at a public meeting, Conservancy staff will prepare a grant agreement setting forth the terms and conditions of the grant. The grantee must sign the grant agreement and comply with all of its conditions in order to receive funds. Preparation and finalization of a Grant Agreement usually takes at least three weeks. Five copies of the Grant Agreement are sent to the grantee for signatures, and all five must be sent back to the Conservancy. The Executive Officer signs each copy and one fully executed copy is sent back to the grantee.

It is important that the person administering the project for the grantee be familiar with the procedures and requirements of the Grant Agreement. There are several steps and requirements for grantees receiving Coastal Conservancy funding. To help prospective grantees understand the process, listed below are the typical requirements for receiving funds from the State Coastal Conservancy. It may be useful for the grantee to arrange a meeting with the Conservancy Project Manager early in the project to review the Grant Agreement conditions.

The Grant Agreement describes these and other requirements in greater detail and will be the controlling document. If there are any questions about the Grant Agreement, discuss them with the Conservancy Project Manager. ***Close review of and compliance with the Grant Agreement is essential and is the grantee's responsibility.***

Typical Conditions and Requirements of Conservancy Grants

- The Conservancy usually limits overhead to 15%.
- Expenses incurred before the Grant Agreement with the Conservancy is executed cannot typically be billed to the grant.

- The Conservancy typically reimburses grantees for expenses after they are incurred. This means the grantee will have to cover the costs of the project between the time the expenses are incurred and they get paid by the Conservancy. It typically takes about 6 weeks between the time an invoice is received at the Conservancy and the payment is received by the grantee.
- Grantees are typically responsible for operation, maintenance and monitoring of completed projects for 20 years.
- Grants to nonprofit organizations for work on property not owned by the nonprofit require an agreement between the landowner, the nonprofit and the Conservancy to protect the public interest in the project.

All Conservancy grantees should expect to be audited by the State of California. It is the grantees responsibility to maintain all necessary records to substantiate and document all payments made pursuant to a Conservancy grant. If a grantee cannot provide adequate records when they are audited, they may be required to repay grant funds. The Conservancy now requires nonprofit grantees to submit the [Nonprofit Organization Pre-Award Questionnaire](#) to help flag any potential issues with accounting and record keeping before the grantee begins work. Technical assistance may be available to help grantees meet all of the state's accounting requirements.