



Funding Research Memo: Fuel Reduction on Public and Private Lands

Last updated: October 2016

THIS MEMO WILL BE UPDATED PERIODICALLY. IF YOU HAVE ANY SUGGESTIONS FOR ADDITIONAL FUNDING RESOURCES, PLEASE CONTACT THE SNC FUND DEVELOPMENT TEAM: sncfundingteam@sierranevada.ca.gov.

CAVEAT – Grant guidelines and deadlines are subject to periodic change. Please check the program web sites for new information. The deadlines listed are projected from the last funding round and are particularly unreliable. Check the program’s web site!

Note: These grants focus on projects that remove excess trees and brush for forest health, wildfire protection, water quality, and streamflow enhancement. Grants focused on vegetation removal for meadow, riparian, or other habitat restoration can be found in the [‘Habitat Restoration and Enhancement’](#) and [‘Riparian, Wetland, and Aquatic Habitat’](#) funding research memos.

Funding Summary Table

(*Hyperlinks to more complete information below, including links to program websites)

PRIVATE LAND ONLY (Non-federal, may include local or state government-owned land.)				
U.S. Department of Agriculture, Natural Resource Conservation Service Watershed and Wetlands Programs	Cost-share with landowner. Amount varies by program.	Programs for watershed protection, riparian restoration, and wetlands restoration on private property.	Ongoing	Varies by program. Contact local NRCS office for information.
California Department of Forestry and Fire and Protection (CAL FIRE) State Responsibility Area (SRA) grants	Grants up to \$200,000. No match required, but other funding or in-kind contributions add to scoring.	Projects that remove dead and dying trees and that reduce wildfire threat to habitable structures within SRA.	September	Removal and transport of dead and dying trees, fire prevention education and planning, or other hazardous fuel reduction.
Non-Point Source (NPS) Grant Program - Timber Regulation and Forest Restoration Funds	Grants range from \$250,000 to \$1 million. A 25% match is required.	Forest management measures to improve water quality on forestlands within the SRA.	September	Eligible forest management measures include streamside management areas, timber harvesting, revegetation, wetlands management, outreach and education, etc.

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CAL FIRE California Forest Improvement Program	Cost-share with landowner. Amount varies – see User’s Guide.	To ensure adequate high-quality timber supplies, related employment and other economic benefits, and the protection, maintenance, and enhancement of a productive and stable forest resource system.	Ongoing	Management planning, site preparation, tree purchase and planting, timber stand improvement, fish and wildlife habitat improvement, and land conservation practices.
U.S. Forest Service Fire Assistance Grants – CA Fire Safe Council	Up to \$200,000. 1:1 non-federal match required.	Projects in the Wildland-Urban Interface protecting communities at risk.	February	Hazardous fuels reduction and maintenance projects on non-federal land (can include purchase of supplies and tools), Community Wildfire Protection Plans and other planning or assessment documents, and prevention and mitigation education and outreach opportunities for landowners and residents.
Federal Emergency Management Agency Pre-Disaster Mitigation Funding	No set amount. 25% match required, although this can be reduced to 10% in small, impoverished communities.	Projects to protect life and structures from wildfires. Must be located in a Wildland-Urban Interface within two miles of homes and structures.	Notice of Interest (NOI) due to the state in May	Defensible space measures and hazardous fuel reduction. Not available for federal lands. Not available for forest health purposes. Projects must be located in a Wildland-Urban Interface, must be adjacent to or intermingled with the built environment, and must provide protection to life and the built environment from future wildfires. National Environmental Policy Act compliance is required.
Bella Vista Foundation	Up to \$150,000. Other sources of funding are important.	Riparian restoration with the goal of enhancing and maintaining self-sustaining watershed ecosystems.	Varies	Restoration work and conservation easements.

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*Grant	Funding Range	Funding Focus	Estimated Deadline	Eligible Costs
BOTH PUBLIC AND PRIVATE LANDS				
Department of Water Resources Integrated Regional Water Management (IRWM) Grants	Depends on solicitation. General match requirement is 50%, but can be waived for disadvantaged communities.	Very broad – the project must address statewide priorities and be listed in the region’s IRWM Plan.	Set periodically. Proposition 1 implementation funding announcement expected in early 2017.	Very broad. One category of eligible projects is watershed protection, restoration, and management projects, including projects that reduce the risk of wildfire or improve water supply reliability.
Sierra Nevada Conservancy Watershed Improvement Grant Program	Up to \$75,000 for planning grants and \$500,000 for implementation grants. Match not required, but adds to score.	Projects that will promote healthy forests and watersheds in the Sierra Nevada Region.	September and March 1	Fuel treatment and forest management projects are eligible, but must show impact on water or watershed health. There is funding for both planning and implementation projects.
CA Resources Agency Environmental Enhancement and Mitigation Program	Grants up to \$500,000. Match is not required, but makes the application more competitive.	Projects designed to mitigate environmental effects of transportation facilities.	July	Eligible projects include enhancement of resource lands to mitigate the loss of, or the detriment to, resource lands lying within or near a right-of-way acquired for transportation improvements.
Secure Rural Schools and Community Self Determination Act of 2000 (Title II)	No set amount. No set match amount, though many projects appear to have leverage.	Projects implementing stewardship objectives that enhance forest ecosystems and restore land health and water quality.	Applications accepted on a rolling basis.	Planning, implementation, community education and outreach, etc. These projects are mostly on public lands, but can be on private lands if the project will impact public lands.
National Forest Foundation Matching Awards Program	\$500 - \$100,000. Requires 1:1 cash match of non-federal funds.	Focus areas are forest health and outdoor experiences.	January and June	On-the ground activities including habitat protection and enhancement, conservation projects, and stewardship projects.
Wildlife Conservation Board CA Streamflow Enhancement Program	No maximum or minimum. Match not required, but adds to score.	Projects that enhance streamflows or provide resilience to climate change.	August	Planning, implementation, acquisition, monitoring, assessment, and scientific studies.



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U.S. Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Programs

<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/ca/programs/financial/>

The NRCS offers a variety of programs that fund wetlands and riparian projects. These programs and the funding authorized for them through the Farm Bill change periodically. Usually they are cost share programs focused on privately-owned land, although sometimes they can be applied to a watershed in general, particularly in emergency watershed restoration circumstances. More information on these programs can be found [here](#).

The most popular NRCS program is the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). EQIP provides financial and technical assistance to agricultural producers in order to address natural resource concerns and deliver environmental benefits such as improved water and air quality, conserved ground and surface water, reduced soil erosion and sedimentation, or improved wildlife habitat. Eligible applicants include owners of non-industrial private forestlands.

The funding opportunities can be accessed by talking to staff in the local NRCS offices. To find a local office, go to [this site](#).

California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) State Responsibility Area (SRA) Fire Prevention Fund and Tree Mortality Grant Program

http://calfire.ca.gov/fire_prevention/fire_prevention_fund_grants

In 2016 the State Responsibility Area Fire Prevention Fund (SRAFPF) and Tree Mortality Grant Program had \$15.75 million available for projects that removed dead and dying trees and reduced wildfire threat to habitable structures within [State Responsibility Areas](#). The SRAFPF is an annual program; the Tree Mortality funding was a new budget allocation in 2016 based on the disaster declaration. Additional funding could be allocated for this program in future years. Qualifying projects and activities include those related to hazardous fuel reduction, fire prevention planning, fire prevention education, and removal of dead, dying, or diseased trees.

Eligible grantees may be local government, fire districts, community services districts, water districts, and special districts with a SRA within their jurisdiction, or certified local conservation corps, Fire Safe Councils, or other 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations. Native American tribes are eligible for the Tree Mortality grants, but are generally not eligible for the SRAFPF grants.

In 2016, the Tree Mortality grants were only available to applicants within the "Priority Counties" as identified by the [Tree Mortality Task Force](#) or in an area of high mortality

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as identified by the [Tree Mortality Viewer](#). Priorities may change in future years. The deadline for applications was September 28.

Non-Point Source (NPS) Grant Program - Timber Regulation and Forest Restoration Funds

http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/nps/grant_program.shtml

As part of the State Water Resource Control Board's non-point source 319(h) grant program, the state in 2016 appropriated funding for the Timber Regulation and Forest Restoration Fund (Timber Fund) to address projects that implement forest management measures on forestlands to improve water quality. These forest management measures include streamside management areas, road reconstruction and management, timber harvesting, revegetation, wetlands management, outreach and education, etc. The projects must be within the [State Responsibility Area](#). Project proposals must address one or more of the NPS program preferences provided in the grant guidelines, which target areas where surface and groundwater quality has been significantly impacted by non-point source contamination. The minimum funding amount is \$250,000 and the maximum is \$1 million. A 25 percent match is required.

CAL FIRE California Forest Improvement Program

http://calfire.ca.gov/resource_mgt/resource_mgt_forestryassistance_cfip.php

The California Forest Improvement Program (CFIP) is a forestry incentive program that provides funds to forest landowners for management plans, Registered Professional Forester (RPF) supervision, site preparation, tree planting, thinning, pruning, follow-up, release, land conservation, and improvement of fish and wildlife habitat. The purpose of the CFIP is to encourage private and public investment in, and improved management of, California forestlands and resources. This focus is to ensure adequate high-quality timber supplies, related employment and other economic benefits, and the protection, maintenance, and enhancement of a productive and stable forest resource system for the benefit of present and future generations.

The program scope includes the improvement of all forest resources, including fish and wildlife habitat, soil, and water quality. The program provides technical assistance to private forest landowners, forest operators, wood processors, and public agencies. Cost-share assistance is provided to private forest landowners, resource conservation districts, and nonprofit watershed groups. Cost-shared activities include management planning, site preparation, tree purchase and planting, timber stand improvement, fish and wildlife habitat improvement, and land conservation practices for ownerships containing 20 - 5,000 acres of forestland. Landowners who own less than 20 acres may qualify if they submit a joint application with neighboring landowners and the combined acreage is a minimum of 20 acres of forestland.

This is a cost share program in which the landowner shares a portion of cost (10 to 25 percent) and the state shares a portion of cost (75 to 90 percent). Additional caps apply (per-acre maximum costs); refer to the User's Guide on the [CFIP web site](#) for

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more information. Landowners wishing to apply for CFIP are encouraged to contact a local CAL FIRE Unit Forester, the unit's Forestry Assistance Specialist, or their RPF for assistance in developing an application package.

CFIP applications may be submitted at any time to the [CAL FIRE Unit](#) in which the project occurs.

U.S. Forest Service State Fire Assistance Grants – CA Fire Safe Council

<http://www.cafiresafecouncil.org/grants-clearinghouse/>

The Grants Clearinghouse is a program of the California Fire Safe Council (CFSC), which offers an online grant application process to make it easier to find and apply for wildfire prevention grants to support community projects. Funding is provided through a master grant to CFSC by the U.S. Forest Service State Fire Assistance program, with CFSC issuing sub-awards to successful applicants for the following areas of wildfire prevention:

- Hazardous fuels reduction and maintenance projects on non-federal land
- Community Wildfire Protection Plans and other planning or assessment documents
- Prevention and mitigation education and outreach opportunities for landowners and residents in at-risk communities

There is a dollar for dollar or 50 percent cost share/match, which means the federal funding can account for up to 50 percent of the project's cost. The remaining 50 percent must come from non-federal sources and can include cash and/or third party in-kind contributions. The maximum grant award is \$200,000 and the duration is 24 months. The average grant award is around \$105,000.

Eligible applicants include nonprofit organizations, property owners' associations, Native American tribes, resource conservation districts, state and local government, special districts, school districts, for-profit companies, and joint powers authorities.

The RFP is usually published in January and the deadline is mid-February. CFSC staff are very helpful and can be contacted for information and assistance. They are listed in the request for applications.

Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Pre-Disaster Mitigation Funding

<https://www.fema.gov/pre-disaster-mitigation-grant-program>

<http://www.caloes.ca.gov/For-Governments-Tribal/Plan-Prepare/Pre-Disaster-Flood-Mitigation>

The Pre-Disaster Mitigation (PDM) program is funding from FEMA that is granted to states, federally recognized tribes, and local communities to help them implement a sustained pre-disaster natural hazard mitigation program. These funds can be used for hazard mitigation projects and planning activities. The state applies for this funding from

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the federal government, and individual communities apply for the state to include their programs in the state's application.

The Hazard Mitigation Assistance Guidance documents are [posted](#) on the FEMA web site. Detailed information about funding wildfire mitigation projects is in the Addendum document.

Wildfire mitigation projects must be technically feasible, effective at reducing risk, and designed and implemented in conformance with all local, state, and federal requirements. The proposed project must also be in conformance with the FEMA-approved Local Hazard Mitigation Plan for the appropriate jurisdiction. Contact county emergency services staff (often located in the sheriff's department) to get a copy of this plan. Projects must have completed National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) review prior to funding. This can be a barrier because the amount of time required to complete NEPA review is often longer than the grant period.

Projects must be located in a Wildland-Urban Interface, adjacent to or intermingled with the built environment, and provide protection to life and the built environment from future wildfires. Eligible activities include defensible space measures (immediately adjacent to structures) and hazardous fuel reduction (beyond defensible space perimeters, but proximate to at-risk structures). All property owners who receive funds for fuel reduction for defensible space must commit to maintaining that defensible space.

The following project activities are among those not eligible for FEMA funding:

- Projects that do not protect homes, neighborhoods, structures, or infrastructure
- Projects on federally owned land and land adjacent to federal lands when the proposed project falls under the primary or specific authority of another federal agency
- Projects for hazardous fuels reduction in excess of two miles from structures
- Projects to address ecological or agricultural issues related to land and forest management (e.g., insects, diseases, infestations, damage from extreme weather events affecting forest-wide health)
- Irrigation of vegetation to avoid disease or drought-related infestation
- Projects to protect the environment or watersheds
- Projects for prescribed burning or clear-cutting activities
- Projects for maintenance activities, deferred or future, without an increase in the level of protection
- Projects for the purchase of fire-related equipment (e.g., vehicles, including fire trucks) or communications equipment
- Projects for the creation and maintenance of fire breaks, access roads, and staging areas
- Purchase of equipment to accomplish eligible work (e.g., chainsaws or chippers)

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The first step in obtaining PDM funding is to submit a Notice of Interest form to the state. This can be done [online](#).

In general, a cost share of 25 percent is required, though this can be reduced to 10 percent in small, impoverished communities.

These are very complicated grants. If considering an application, it is wise to track down a staff person at the state Office of Emergency Services for guidance.

Bella Vista Foundation

<http://www.bellavistafoundation.org/>

Under its ecosystem restoration grant category, the foundation focuses on protecting, restoring, and revitalizing high-priority watershed ecosystems in California and Oregon. Within these watersheds, the priorities are promoting the sustainable management of forest and agricultural land, revitalizing streams, and restoring riparian areas, with the goal of enhancing and maintaining self-sustaining watershed ecosystems. Target watersheds in California include the Mattole River watershed; the mid-Klamath/Scott/Shasta Rivers; the McCloud tributary of the Sacramento River; and in the Sierra Nevada, the Truckee River watershed and Yuba/Bear/American Rivers.

No specific match is required, but the foundation strongly prefers not to be the sole or primary source of funding.

CA Department of Water Resources – Integrated Regional Water Management (IRWM) Grants

<http://www.water.ca.gov/irwm/grants/index.cfm>

While all of the Proposition 84 IRWM funding has been granted, Proposition 1 has allocated an additional \$510 million to the program. The guidelines for the new Proposition 1 grant program are being finalized during 2016. Make sure to check the web site for the most recent information.

IRWM grant applications must be approved by IRWM regions through the Regional Water Management Groups (RWMG) although they are submitted through individual agencies. In order to be approved, the proposed grant activity must be included in the IRWM Plan for that region. These Plans can be amended and modified by the RWMG. So if considering funding your project with IRWM funding, check the IRWM Plan for your region and if the project is not already part of the plan, take steps to have it added.

IRWM grants do not have a standard maximum amount; this is set in each solicitation. The general match requirement for a Proposition 1 grant is 50 percent, though that can be waived if the project addresses the needs of a disadvantaged community. Matching funds must be from non-state sources.

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The scope of IRWM grant projects is very large. The projects have to address statewide priorities, which are listed in the program solicitation. One category of eligible projects is watershed protection, restoration, and management projects, including projects that reduce the risk of wildfire or improve water supply reliability.

Sierra Nevada Conservancy Watershed Improvement Program Grants

<http://www.sierranevada.ca.gov/other-assistance/prop1-grantprog>

The focus of this Proposition 1-funded grant program is forest health projects that result in multiple watershed benefits, consistent with the following purposes:

- Implementing fuel treatment projects to reduce wildfire risks, protect watersheds tributary to water storage facilities, and promote watershed health
- Protecting and restoring rural and urban watershed health to improve watershed storage capacity, forest health, protection of life and property, and reduce greenhouse gases
- Implementing watershed adaptation projects in order to reduce the impacts of climate changes on California's communities and ecosystems

The program has two funding categories: Category 1 for implementation projects (maximum \$500,000) and Category 2 for project planning (maximum \$75,000). A funding match is not required, but leverage will add to point scores. Eligible applicants include local and state public agencies (federal agencies are not eligible), qualifying nonprofit organizations, and certain tribal organizations.

In order to be eligible to receive a grant award from the Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) under this program, projects must meet all of the following criteria:

- Be located within a conifer or mixed-conifer forested area of the Sierra Nevada Region, or have a direct impact on forest lands and waters within the Region
- Be consistent with the SNC mission and program areas as defined in the SNC Strategic Plan and the Sierra Nevada Watershed Improvement Program as they relate to forest health
- Meet the requirements of Proposition 1 in regard to forest and watershed health

Applicants are encouraged to meet with SNC Area Representatives (listed in the Grant Guidelines) to discuss their projects prior to submitting an application. Deadlines for 2015-2017 are September 1 and March 1.

CA Resources Agency Environmental Enhancement and Mitigation Program

<http://resources.ca.gov/grants/environmental-enhancement-and-mitigation-eem/>

The Environmental Enhancement and Mitigation (EEM) Program is designed to fund projects that contribute to mitigation of the environmental effects of transportation facilities. Eligible projects must be related to the environmental impact of a new or modified transportation facility. This means that the proposed project must be in the immediate vicinity or general area of work done on a public street, highway, mass

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transit guideway (trains, ports, light rail lines, city streets, airports, etc.) or their appurtenant features (park and ride facilities, high-occupancy vehicle lanes, transit stations, etc.). These are called Related Transportation Facilities (RTFs). Eligible RTFs can be identified by contacting the local Transportation Department, Regional Transit Agency, Metropolitan Transit Authority, Council of Local Governments, Metropolitan Planning Organization, or Caltrans District Office. A lot of documentation will be needed from this transportation agency, so contact them early in the process.

Project categories:

- Urban forestry projects designed to offset vehicular emissions of carbon dioxide
- Acquisition or enhancement of resource lands to mitigate the loss of, or the detriment to, resource lands lying within or near the right-of-way acquired for transportation improvements
- Mitigation projects beyond the scope of the lead agency responsible for assessing the environmental impact of the proposed transportation improvement

The EEM Program encourages projects that produce multiple benefits that reduce greenhouse gas emissions, increase water use efficiency, reduce risks from climate change impacts, and demonstrate collaboration with local, state, and community entities. Eligible applicants are local, state, and federal governmental agencies and nonprofit organizations.

The maximum grant is \$500,000. Matching funding is not required, but contributes to the competitiveness of the project. The 2016 deadline was July 12.

Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000 (Title II)

http://www.fs.usda.gov/wps/portal/fsinternet!/ut/p/c4/04_SB8K8xLLM9MSSzPy8xBz9CP0os3gjAwhwtDDw9_Al8zPwhQoY6BdkOyoCAPkATIA!/?ss=119985&navtype=BROWS EBYSUBJECT&cid=FSE_003853&navid=0910000000000000&pnavid=null&position=BR OWSEBYSUBJECT&ttype=main&pname=Secure%20Rural%20Schools-%20Home

The Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act provides funding for counties where much of the land is designated as National Forest. The purpose of the funding is to help compensate for the lack of tax revenue that would have been generated if the land were privately owned. The funds available represent a percentage of the receipts that the U.S. Forest Service collects from timber, grazing, land use, and other revenue-generating activities. The program provides funding for schools and roads, makes additional investments in projects that enhance forest ecosystems, and aims to improve cooperative relationships. There are several categories of funding in the Act, and counties have options for which of these categories to select. One category of funding is Title II. These funds may be used for the protection, restoration, and enhancement of fish and wildlife habitat, and to achieve other resource objectives consistent with the Act. The projects must either be located on National Forest land or on non-federal land where projects would benefit the resources on the National Forest.

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Projects can:

- Improve the maintenance of existing infrastructure
- Implement stewardship objectives that enhance forest ecosystems
- Restore and improve land health and water quality

At least 50 percent of all Title II funds must be used for projects that are primarily dedicated to road maintenance, decommissioning, or obliteration; or restoration of streams and watersheds. Specific types of projects that are often funded include:

- Road, trail, and infrastructure maintenance or obliteration
- Soil productivity improvement
- Improvements in forest ecosystem health
- Watershed restoration and maintenance
- Restoration, maintenance, and improvement of wildlife and fish habitat
- Control of noxious and exotic weeds
- Re-establishment of native species

Each county electing to administer Title II project funds works with the U.S. Forest Service to establish Resource Advisory Committees (RACs) that will recommend how the Title II funds should be spent. Find a local Resource Advisory Committee (RAC) and see a list of the projects it has funded [here](#). Applications to the RACs can be submitted [online](#).

The size of the grants varies widely depending on the amount of funding available, competition from other projects, and other factors. Contact RAC members or a local U.S. Forest Service staff person who is assigned as the 'designated federal official' to get more information about the typical size of grants given locally.

National Forest Foundation Matching Awards Program

<http://www.nationalforests.org/conserve/grantprograms/ontheground/map>

The NFF Matching Awards Program (MAP) is a grant program that provides matching funds for direct on-the-ground projects that have an immediate, quantifiable impact on America's National Forests and Grasslands. MAP supports the strategic focus areas of Forest Health and Outdoor Experiences.

Projects that fit into the Forest Health program area are results-oriented, on-the-ground, citizen-involved projects that maintain and/or restore forest resiliency by:

- Promoting forest structural complexity, function, and diversity over time; and/or
- Promoting forest health through the removal or control of non-native invasive species, and/or reintroduction of native plants and trees

Projects that are consistent with or supportive of large-scale conservation initiatives receive weighted advantage.

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Eligible applicants are nonprofit 501(c)(3) organizations and Native American tribes working on or adjacent to National Forests and Grasslands throughout the U.S. Past awards range from \$500 to over \$100,000, with an average award of around \$25,000. Deadlines are twice a year, in January and June.

Wildlife Conservation Board CA Streamflow Enhancement Program

<https://www.wcb.ca.gov/Programs/Stream-Flow-Enhancement>

This program allocates funds to projects that enhance stream flows, especially in those streams that support anadromous fish, special-status, threatened, endangered, or at-risk species; or provide resilience to climate change. Projects must measurably enhance stream flows at a time and location necessary to provide fisheries or ecosystem benefits that improve upon existing flow conditions.

One eligible project type is habitat restoration projects (e.g., weed eradication, wet meadow restoration, restoration of entrenched streams, upper watershed restoration, or forest thinning) that reshape a stream hydrograph. Funding can be used for planning, implementation, acquisition, studies, monitoring, and assessments. Eligible grantees are public agencies, nonprofit organizations, public utilities, federally recognized Indian tribes, state Indian tribes listed on the Native American Heritage Commission's California Tribal Consultation list, and mutual water companies.

Matching funds are not required, but leverage adds points in scoring. The deadlines are generally the end of August or September.