



**FY 2020 – 2022
COMPANION DOCUMENT
for the
VIBRANT RECREATION & TOURISM
GRANT GUIDELINES**

Directed Grant Program



**Sierra Nevada Watershed
Improvement Program**

Funded by Proposition 68

**California Drought, Water, Parks, Climate, Coastal
Protection, and Outdoor Access For All Act of 2018**



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.

sierranevada.ca.gov

Table of Contents

I.	Introduction	3
II.	Background	4
III.	Program Priorities for Fiscal Years 2020-2021 & 2021-2022	6
	Additional Considerations	7
	Engagement with California Native American Tribes	7
	Disadvantaged Communities	7
	Geographic Distribution of Funds.....	7
	Applicant Eligibility	7
	Project Eligibility.....	8
IV.	Program Process.....	9
	Project Development.....	9
	Schedule	9
	Evaluation Process	9
	Evaluation Criteria.....	10

I. Introduction

The Sierra Nevada Conservancy is pleased to announce the next funding cycle for the Vibrant Recreation and Tourism Directed Grant Program, effective July 1, 2020.

The [Vibrant Recreation and Tourism Grant Guidelines](#) (Grant Guidelines) released in 2019 is the governing document for the program. This Companion Document describes the program priorities for this funding cycle. It is intended to provide specific details for this funding cycle but should be considered in conjunction with the Grant Guidelines.

SNC anticipates the availability of \$1 million for the Vibrant Recreation and Tourism Grant Program in this funding cycle, during Fiscal Years 2020-2021 and 2021-2022. However, the amount of funding available is subject to change.

II. Background

The mission of the Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) is to initiate, encourage, and support efforts that improve the environmental, economic, and social well-being of the Sierra Nevada Region, its communities, and the citizens of California. The bipartisan Laird-Leslie Sierra Nevada Conservancy Act (Act), enacted in 2004 and commencing with Public Resources Code (PRC) Section 33300, established the SNC; Sections 33343 and 33346 set forth the authority for SNC to award grants of funds in order to carry out the purposes of the Act. The statute that created the SNC emphasizes the importance of carrying out the mission in an integrated and complementary manner and the important role an organization providing strategic direction and resources to the Region can play. The SNC's activities fall under seven statutorily mandated program areas:

- 1) Increasing the opportunity for tourism and recreation in the Region
- 2) Protecting, conserving, and restoring the Region's physical, cultural, archaeological, historical, and living resources
- 3) Aiding in the preservation of working landscapes
- 4) Reducing the risk of natural disasters such as wildfire
- 5) Protecting and improving water and air quality
- 6) Assisting the Regional economy through the operation of the SNC's program
- 7) Enhancing public use and enjoyment of lands owned by the public

The [SNC Strategic Plan](#) (Plan) is developed in accordance with the Act and provides direction for SNC activities and the Grant Guidelines (Guidelines). The Plan identifies five Regional Goals:

- 1) Healthy Watersheds and Forests
- 2) Resilient Sierra Nevada Communities
- 3) Vibrant Recreation and Tourism
- 4) Strategic Lands Conserved
- 5) Impactful Regional Identity

The Vibrant Recreation and Tourism goal concentrates on efforts to enhance, promote, and develop sustainable recreation and tourism opportunities in the Sierra Nevada Region. The Region offers tremendous outdoor recreation opportunities that both rely on healthy watersheds and forests and support tourism and economic growth in California's rural communities. For many of the communities in the Region, revenue

from recreation and tourism represents the largest portions of their economies, and jobs from recreation provide residents with the opportunity to work and thrive in their communities.

California voters passed [Proposition 68, the California Drought, Water, Parks, Climate, Coastal Protection, and Outdoor Access For All Act of 2018](#), on June 5, 2018.

Proposition 68 added Division 45 to the Public Resources Code, authorizing the state to issue bonds, and the Legislature to appropriate the proceeds, for purposes identified in the Act. Proposition 68 recognizes the critical importance of recreation and tourism to California's economy and ecology, and specifically directs funds to be used to support and expand recreation economies, opportunities, and access to outdoor recreation. Section 80110(9) allocates \$30 million of these funds to SNC for purposes specified by its governing statute.

III. Program Priorities for Fiscal Years 2020-2021 & 2021-2022

The Sierra Nevada Conservancy recognizes the fundamental connection between vibrant recreation and tourism across the Region, the health and resilience of Sierra Nevada communities, and the ecological health of California’s watersheds and forests. Working with partners to strategically implement activities supporting recreation and tourism will protect these benefits and the resources that are important to the Sierra Nevada Region. This program aims to support innovative, collaborative efforts to enhance, promote, and develop sustainable recreation and tourism opportunities and increase access to public lands in the Sierra Nevada Region.

For this funding cycle, the Vibrant Recreation and Tourism Directed Grant Program will focus on collaboratives organized specifically for the purpose of recreation and tourism. The intent of these program priorities is to support existing recreation and tourism collaboratives and encourage the establishment of new collaboratives by planning for and implementing multi-benefit recreation and tourism projects developed through a collaborative process.

The specific focus areas of the Vibrant Recreation and Tourism Directed Grant Program for Fiscal Years 2020-2021 and 2021-2022 are outlined below. Projects must fall within one of the focus areas to be considered for funding.

1) Collaborative Project Implementation

Implementation of capital improvement projects designed by a collaborative group organized specifically for the purpose of recreation and tourism. Projects must clearly have multiple benefits, such as recreation infrastructure with water quality benefits, or recreation with habitat protection.

2) Collaborative Project Planning

Support the establishment or capacity-building of collaboratives through grants which result in the identification, prioritization, and preparation for capital improvement projects. Projects must clearly have multiple benefits, such as recreation infrastructure with water quality benefits, or recreation with habitat protection.

Consistent with the requirements of Proposition 68, all projects must either plan for or implement capital improvement projects that will benefit California citizens for no less than 30 years.

SNC anticipates the availability of \$1 million for the Vibrant Recreation and Tourism Grant Program in this funding cycle, but the amount available is dependent upon FY 2020- 2021 State Budget allocations.

Additional Considerations

Engagement with California Native American Tribes

The SNC strongly encourages engagement with Native American tribes as early as possible in the development, planning, and implementation of projects. SNC staff can assist project proponents with identifying Native American tribes whose ancestral homelands may be in the project area and help provide contact information for those tribes. The SNC will notify the appropriate tribal contacts regarding all eligible grant projects being considered for funding in their area. SNC may prioritize projects in which tribal communities are involved.

Disadvantaged Communities

Proposition 68 states that at least 20 percent of the funds available pursuant to Chapter 8 shall be allocated to projects serving severely disadvantaged communities (SDAC). (§80008[a][1]). SNC may prioritize projects which serve SDACs. Please visit the California State Parks website for a [map of community designations](https://www.parksforcalifornia.org/communities) (<https://www.parksforcalifornia.org/communities>).

Geographic Distribution of Funds

SNC strives to achieve an equitable balance in the distribution of grant funds across the Sierra Nevada Region, appropriate to program priorities and the variety of needs across the region. SNC may take the geographic distribution of funds into consideration when developing projects.

Applicant Eligibility

Grant funds may be authorized for:

- Public agencies: any city, county, special district, joint powers authority, state agency, or federal agency
- Qualifying 501(c)(3) nonprofit 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 SNC.

- Eligible Tribal Entities: an Indian tribe, band, nation, or other organized group or community, or a tribal agency authorized by a tribe, which is one or both of the following: (1) Recognized by the United States and identified within the most current Federal Register; (2) Listed on the contact list maintained by the Native American Heritage Commission as a California Native American tribe.

NOTE: SNC's governing statute does not allow grants to mutual water companies.

Project Eligibility

To be eligible to receive a grant award from the SNC under this program, projects must meet all the following criteria:

- Be located within the Sierra Nevada Region.
- Be consistent with the Program Objectives described in the [Vibrant Recreation and Tourism Grant Guidelines](#).
- Meet one of the two focus areas described in the Program Priorities section of this Companion Document
 - Collaborative Project Implementation
 - Collaborative Project Planning
- Be consistent with the SNC mission and program areas as defined in the [SNC Strategic Plan](#).
- Meet all requirements of [Proposition 68](#).
- Be consistent with recommendations of the [2018 California Forest Carbon Plan](#).
- Result in a clear, demonstrable, and enduring public benefit.

Any additional requirements or restrictions, including those specific to additional funding sources or new state budget requirements, will be included on the SNC website program description.

IV. Program Process

Project Development

As the Vibrant Recreation and Tourism program is a directed grant program, proposals are developed in conjunction with SNC. To initiate consideration of a project, an applicant should contact the appropriate [SNC Area Representative](#) or other SNC staff. The Area Representative will assist the applicant organizer to determine if the project meets SNC criteria. If it is determined that SNC will consider partnering on the project, the Area Representative will share the SNC Concept Proposal Form with the applicant and assist in developing the project. Upon review of a Concept Proposal, applicants may be directed to develop a full Proposal in conjunction with SNC staff.

Schedule

Proposals are accepted on a continuous basis and will be considered on a quarterly cycle, starting July 2020.

- 1) **July 2020:** Program announcement in July 2020
- 2) **September 2020:** Review of Concept Proposals and direction given to develop full Proposals
- 3) **November 2020:** Review of full Proposals and decisions regarding continued due diligence activities and potential recommendations to the SNC Governing Board
- 4) **March 2021:** If due diligence is complete, recommended to the SNC Governing Board for grant award

The cycle will repeat every quarter.

Evaluation Process

The SNC will work closely with applicants in the development of the project and project proposal. As such, project evaluation will not come after submission of a proposal, but instead will occur upon initial discussion and throughout the project development process. The following evaluation aspects will be considerations in project development:

- 1) The project and its proposal will be reviewed by a technical expert for technical merit.
- 2) The project and its proposal will be reviewed by an environmental compliance expert.

- 3) Proposals will be shared with appropriate county/city planning, water agency, and tribal representatives. If there are any privacy concerns related to information in a proposal, please discuss them with SNC staff before submission.
- 4) An SNC Evaluation Team will independently review and meet to discuss the proposals based on the evaluation criteria described in the following section.
- 5) The Evaluation Team will prepare a recommendation for SNC's Executive Team.
- 6) After the evaluation process is complete, including all due diligence and analysis by SNC, funding recommendation(s) will be placed on a future Board meeting agenda at the discretion of SNC's Executive Officer.

NOTE: The SNC will consider the geographic distribution of projects, tribal involvement, project locations related to disadvantaged communities, and project types when considering recommendations to the Board.

Evaluation Criteria

Project proposals will not move forward with recommendation to SNC's Executive Officer until the following criteria have been addressed to the satisfaction of SNC and the project proponent:

1) **Alignment with funding and program goals and related state priorities**

The degree to which a project aligns with:

- a. Current Funding Cycle priorities
One of the following focus areas must be met:
 - i. Collaborative Project Implementation
 - ii. Collaborative Project Planning
- b. The [SNC Strategic Plan](#)
- c. [Proposition 68](#) or other funding source
- d. State Planning Priorities addressed in the Grant Guidelines, including [Safeguarding California](#) and the [California Forest Carbon Plan](#)
- e. Other local, Regional, state, or federal plans

2) **Public / Natural Resource Benefits**

The degree to which the project provides multiple tangible, enduring, public benefits with a high likelihood that the benefits will be realized. Is the need for the specific project clearly identified and explained? Are the natural resource and economic benefits explained and reasonable? Will the project benefit disadvantaged communities?

- 3) **Project Readiness**
The degree to which the project is ready to proceed promptly if funded. Is project planning and coordination complete? Is access secured, environmental compliance, permitting, or other necessary preparations complete as appropriate? Is all funding identified or secured?
- 4) **Project Design**
Clarity on the project purpose, goals, deliverables, and schedule. Is the project approach well designed and appropriate for meeting the objectives and deliverables of the project?
- 5) **Project Budget**
The degree to which the budget is adequate and reasonable to implement the project. Are costs clearly identified, supported, and meet reasonable levels of fees for service?
- 6) **Long-Term Management**
Is a plan, funding, and the responsible entity in place for carrying out long-term management? How will public benefits be sustained?
- 7) **Likelihood of Success**
Does the project organizer have the necessary experience and sufficient capacity to implement the project as described?
- 8) **Community Support and Collaboration**
The degree to which the project has public and institutional support at the local, Regional, or larger scale and the local community or other stakeholders are engaged in project planning or delivery. Was the project developed as part of collaborative? Is there clear and demonstrable community outreach and support for the project and any community economic benefits? Is there tribal support for or tribal participation in the project?
- 9) **Landscape-Level Context**
The degree to which the proposed project is part of a larger plan, coordinated effort, or is proximate to public lands or recreational amenities. Does the project support a broader, cumulative effort to restore/protect strategic goals?
- 10) **Leveraging**
The degree to which a project provides in-kind services and/or secured federal, state, private, or local cost share funding. Have non-monetary and/or funding resources of agencies and organizations other than SNC been identified and secured?