SIERRA NEVADA CONSERVANCY

LANDSCAPE GRANT PROGRAM GUIDELINES

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Background

The Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) created the Watershed Improvement Program (WIP) in 2015 to advance investment and policy support for large-scale, holistic forest-resilience efforts across the Sierra-Cascade region. The SNC has supported partners through every stage of project development, from convening collaborations and identifying landscape needs through project implementation and maintenance. The success of the WIP led to legislative codification within SNC's governing statute in 2018 and multiple rounds of watershed improvement funding. In 2021, California's Wildfire and Forest Resilience Task Force was established and set a vision for an integrated, statewide approach to forest health and community resilience and the state rapidly increased the scale of investment to safeguard and improve forest conditions. In response, the SNC developed the Landscape Investment Strategy in 2022 to improve our ability to deploy funds effectively at scale and leverage SNC's core strengths, including trusted local relationships, deep regional knowledge, and technical expertise.

Although significant progress has been made to restore the health of Sierra-Cascade forests and watersheds, several challenges continue to limit the implementation of restoration and resilience projects at scale:

- **Scale mismatch:** High-severity wildfire, tree mortality, and other major forest disturbances regularly impact tens to hundreds of thousands of acres, while most funding is constrained to project-level efforts, typically limited to a few thousand acres.

- **Fragmented funding:** State and federal restoration and resilience dollars are spread across multiple agencies, departments, and programs with overlapping objectives. Collaborative groups must spend considerable time and resources navigating multiple funding streams, diverting effort from on-the-ground work.

- **Timeline discrepancy**: Grant cycles rarely align with the long-term nature of ecological restoration, which often requires decades of sustained effort and multiple treatments to achieve resilience.

It is the SNC's intent to begin addressing these challenges with this Landscape Grant Program.

Building to Landscape-Scale

Recognizing the need for organizations to collaborate and plan across large, multi-jurisdictional landscapes, the Regional Forest and Fire Capacity Program (RFFCP) was created to build the capacity of Subregional collaborative groups[1] to develop, prioritize, and implement landscape-scale programs of work. Since its launch in 2021 by the California Department of Conservation, the RFFCP and other capacity investments have substantially strengthened the ability of collaborative groups to work at scale across the Sierra-Cascade Region. The SNC Landscape Investment Strategy built on this readiness by creating a vehicle for sustained, flexible, multi-agency investment for collaboratives to work across large landscapes. The Landscape Investment Strategy offers a coordinated framework through which local, state, and federal agencies, funders and partners, can align resources, leverage one another's funding, and pursue shared forest health and wildfire-resilience outcomes.

In 2022, in conjunction with the SNC Landscape Investment Strategy, SNC launched a Landscape Grant Pilot Program (LGPP) as a proof-of-concept, combining SNC and United States Forest Service (USFS) funding under a single agreement and coordinating investment with CAL FIRE. The LGPP generated administrative efficiencies, strengthened interagency coordination, and achieved economies of scale. Lessons from the LGPP, coupled with a growing number of collaboratives with landscape-scale programs of work, have resulted in a Sierra-Cascade Region ready for landscape-scale investment.

The SNC is well positioned to lead landscape-scale investment and to work with state, federal, and foundation funders to align resources effectively. Deeply connected to collaboratives across the Sierra-Cascade Region, the SNC is a trusted partner with efficient, proven, and flexible grant programs, as well as the administrative capacity and relationships needed to support successful implementation in an environment shaped by climate change, wildfires, and other unexpected challenges. The SNC staff is embedded in local communities, providing firsthand understanding of workforce, wildfire, and operational constraints, with knowledge and experience that enables SNC to navigate bureaucratic and logistical hurdles in close partnership with grantees. We also collaborate with other agencies within the California Natural Resources Agency umbrella, as well as the Wildfire and Forest Resilience Task Force and the RFFCP, ensuring investments are strategic, coordinated, and capable of delivering multiple measurable outcomes. Funders can draw on SNC's Regional knowledge, strong partner relationships, and grantmaking expertise, to direct investment to collaboratives with the capacity to implement landscape-scale programs of work or crosscutting regional initiatives that meet specific resilience objectives across multiple landscapes. This coordination will enable funders to streamline administrative processes and create efficiencies for funders and partners alike.

[1] Forest Collaborative: a functioning collaborative group that includes multiple persons or entities representing diverse interests, that is transparent and inclusive, and that has sufficient expertise, capacity, and scientific support to effectively plan, implement, and monitor landscape-level, ecological-based forest restoration activities. (CA Pub Res Code § 4810, 2024)

The 2024 Safe Drinking Water, Wildfire Prevention, and Protecting Communities and Natural Lands from Climate Risks Bond Act of 2024 (Climate Bond) designated $170 million to “implement regional projects, including but not limited to, landscape-scale projects developed by forest collaboratives as defined in Public Resource Code (PRC) Section 4810, projects developed by regional entities as defined in PRC Section 4208, and projects that implement strategies developed by state conservancies[2].” Similarly, the federal Wildfire Crisis Strategy calls for investing at the scale of the problem rather than through fragmented, one-off efforts. The proven success of the LGPP, the expansion of forest collaboratives, and the availability of new landscape-scale funding have prompted the SNC to evolve the LGPP into a fully established initiative across the Sierra-Cascade Region— the SNC Landscape Grant Program (LGP).

[2] Pub. Resources Code (PRC), section (§) 91520, et seq.

Landscape Grant Program: Scaling up Success

The SNC's organizational structure —small enough to be nimble and responsive yet established and trusted—allows the agency to maintain strong relationships with the people who live in, steward, and manage Sierra-Cascade landscapes. Staff of the SNC live and work in forested communities and engage directly with tribes, land managers, local governments, and collaborative groups advancing land stewardship, forest restoration, and community resilience. With a deep understanding of local conditions and needs, the SNC works closely with partners to align funding, support implementation, and ensure that projects deliver meaningful ecological and community outcomes.

The SNC has formalized insights gained through long-standing engagement with collaboratives working across the Sierra-Cascade in a Regional Priority Plan Explorer (RPP Explorer), part of a statewide capacity-tracking effort led by the Department of Conservation. The RPP Explorer is an interactive database and map that shows where collaborative groups are working at, or building toward, landscape-scale restoration and provides information on membership, governance, project portfolios, and readiness for landscape-scale work. Additional information about the RPP Explorer, its connection to SNC's Landscape Grant Program, and how partners can be included in the RPP Explorer can be found on SNC's Landscape Investment Strategy webpage.

The LGP provides substantial funding to enable the advancement of landscape-scale project work. Unlike typical project-specific grants, the LGP will primarily be directed towards high-capacity collaborative groups working across multi-jurisdictional landscapes, advancing portfolios of restoration and resilience projects that address ecological and community priorities at a landscape scale. With the initial funds available, SNC anticipates awarding four to five grants, each between $8 million to $12 million. The LGP is a directed grant program that does not issue an open request for proposals. Instead, the program leverages SNC's core strengths, including trusted local relationships, deep Regional knowledge, and technical expertise to identify grantees. The SNC may reserve some funding to support proven, scalable Regional initiatives that support landscape scale efforts, address shared challenges across multiple landscapes, and which help advance state priorities related to wildfire resilience, forest health, and nature-based solutions. The SNC may also reserve some funding for activities on specially designated public lands, such as national monuments, which might not otherwise be considered eligible, but which present a special opportunity for landscape-scale impact.

The LGP intends to attract and coordinate additional investments from multiple funders. By aligning and, when possible, combining funding streams into a single agreement, the LGP reduces administrative burden for both collaboratives and funders. Although the intent of the program is to reduce community wildfire risk and restore the health and resilience of Sierra–Cascade forests and landscapes through implementation projects, the program's funding is intentionally flexible, allowing SNC to work with local partners to direct resources where they are most needed for planning or other needs.

Funding Priorities

The LGP aims to connect and align multiple state and federal initiatives investing in collaboration, capacity, science and data, and project planning, permitting, and implementation in the Sierra-Cascade Region. With forest health as the foundation, the LGP will support SNC's primary initiative – the WIP – by funding multi-benefit projects that improve forest and watershed health, build climate change resilience, and strengthen Sierra-Cascade communities. The LGP is designed to help advance SNC and state goals related to biodiversity, carbon, and water resources, community and forest resilience, local economies, and cultural and tribal priorities. These goals align with the following state and Regional plans and strategies:

- The Sierra Nevada Conservancy's Strategic Plan
- California Wildfire and Forest Resilience Action Plan and 2025 Key Deliverables
- California's Climate Adaptation Strategy
- 2022 Scoping Plan for Achieving Carbon Neutrality
- California's Natural and Working Lands Climate Smart Strategy
- Nature Based Solutions Climate Targets
- 30 x 30 California
- Outdoors for All
- California's Joint Strategy for Sustainable Outdoor Recreation & Wildfire Resilience

Eligible Funding Recipients

Landscape grants are intended to fund collaborative groups implementing a project portfolio. Once selected as an LGP finalist, collaborative groups will need to identify one or more funding recipients to manage the grant funds. Funding recipients acting to implement the project portfolio must be eligible to receive and manage SNC grant funds. The SNC recognizes that collaboratives are organized in many ways, and it is not the agency's intention to require the administration of a large collaborative grant be the responsibility of a single lead organization. Therefore, if the collaborative determines it is more effective to manage multiple smaller grants, rather than a single larger grant, the SNC may consider alternatives to a single, block grant.

Grant funds may only be awarded to:

- 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. Eligible tribal entities are encouraged to apply. On September 25, 2020, the governor released a Statement of Administration Policy on Native American Ancestral Lands to encourage every state agency, department, board, and commission subject to his executive control to seek opportunities to support California tribes’ co-management of and access to natural lands that are within a California tribe’s ancestral land and under the ownership or control of the state of California. The SNC may give favorable consideration to projects that “assist California tribes with procurement, protection, or management of natural lands located within their ancestral territories, subject to available resources.”

Example Eligible Activities

Projects may include multi-benefit activities that improve forest and watershed health and resilience. Examples of eligible activities include, but are not limited to:

Fuels Reduction – Strategic vegetation treatments (e.g., mechanical treatments, hand treatments and/or beneficial fire) that will reduce wildfire risks, protect communities, critical infrastructure or other valued resources and assets, promote watershed health and forest resilience, improve habitat conditions, and/or protect biodiversity. Transportation costs of woody biomass are eligible for reimbursement.

Beneficial Fire – Expanding the use of beneficial fire and/or reintroducing fire to fire-adapted ecosystems, for example, broadcast burning, pile burning, cultural burning, and activities to prepare a site for fire.

Post-fire recovery – Post-fire restoration and recovery activities, for example, reforestation, hazard tree removal, projects that protect water resources by reducing post-fire sedimentation, and projects that leverage burn footprints to create, enhance, or maintain desired conditions.

Maintenance – Eligible activities that maintain the desired conditions of and/or improvements to previously established and completed projects.

Monitoring – evaluating project effectiveness to adaptively manage landscapes.

Planning – A portion of the budget may be used for planning activities to advance projects within the portfolio.

Recreation, tourism, and public access – A small percentage of the budget may be used for projects or activities that enhance, promote, and develop sustainable recreation and tourism opportunities and increase public access in the Sierra-Cascade Region.

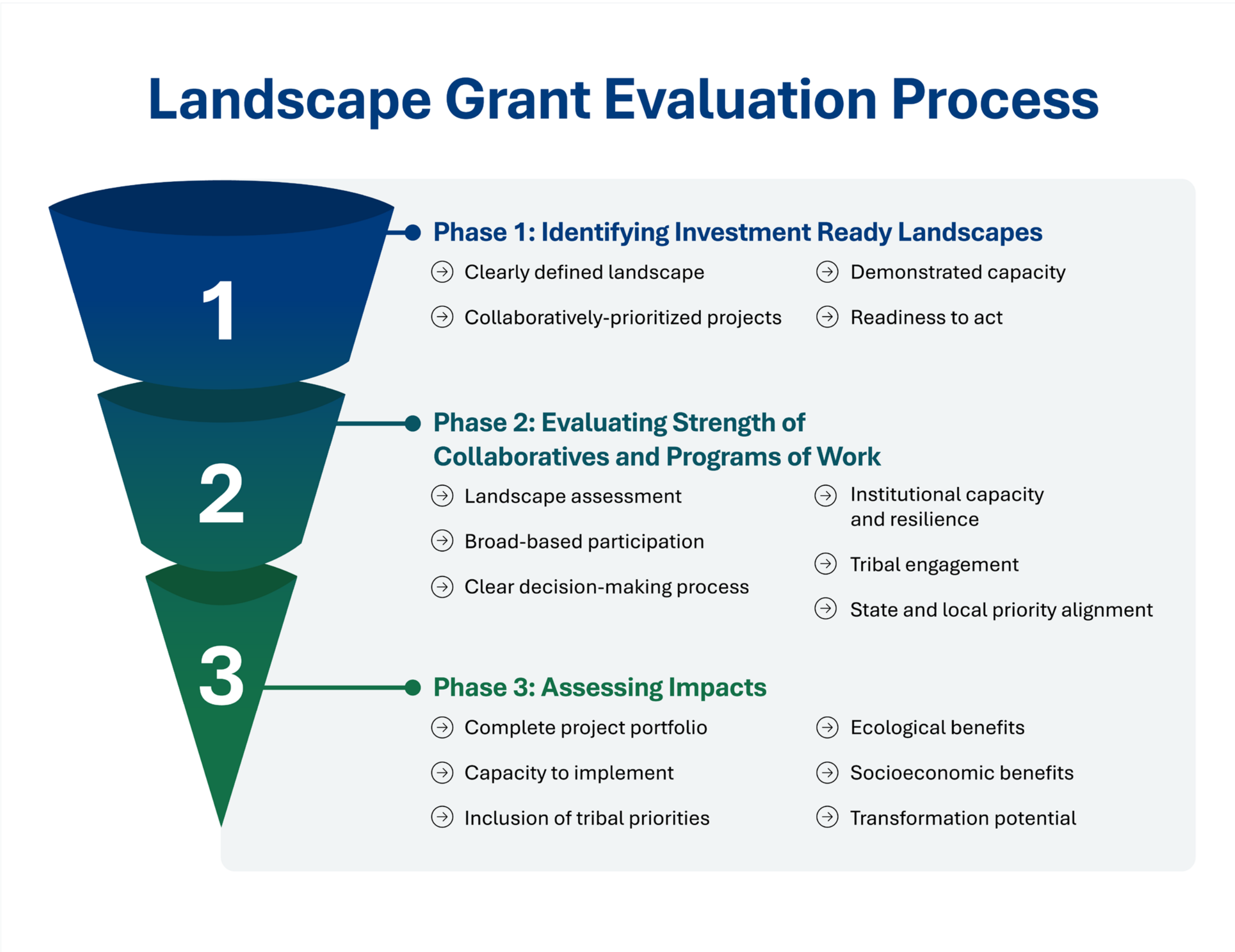
Watershed Function– Eligible activities would include those that address water supply timing and quality, address flood risks, protect critical natural and built water infrastructure, restore hydrologic functioning of meadows and riparian corridors.

Workforce Education & Training – A component of the project's scope and budget may include opportunities for workforce development, job training, and job opportunities for vulnerable populations.

Program coordination – coordinating collaborative partners to plan, prioritize, implement, and monitor projects.

Program and Evaluation Process

The LGP is a directed program with an internal evaluation process that will occur in three phases: (1) Identification of Investment Ready Landscapes by SNC; (2) Evaluation of the administrative and implementation capacities and portfolio development processes of collaborative groups affiliated with those landscapes by SNC; (3) Interviews between SNC and top-ranking collaborative groups to assess proposed project activities, expected deliverables, and anticipated impacts. Based on these assessments, selected groups will be recommended to the SNC Governing Board for funding consideration. Once the SNC Governing Board approves programmatic funding for an LGP grantee, the SNC will work with the grantee to develop a list of projects and detailed scope of work for each project to be proposed to the SNC Governing Board for approval.



Phase I: Identifying Investment Ready Landscapes

To determine the readiness of collaborative groups, the SNC draws on longstanding engagement with regional collaboratives, our capacity-building efforts through the RFFCP, and grant management experience through previous Local Assistance Grant Programs. This information informs SNC's internal assessment of which collaboratives are ready for landscape-scale investment.

Regional collaboratives working with the SNC through the above-mentioned programs will be evaluated for readiness – no additional actions are required. However, collaboratives new to the SNC may contact the Area Representative for their Subregion to request consideration for the next update if they feel they meet the four key attributes described in more detail below.

Attributes of an Investment Ready Landscape

The SNC determines a landscape is Investment Ready when it possesses all the following:

A clearly defined landscape supported by an affiliated collaborative group
Investment-Ready Landscape collaboratives bring together partners with diverse perspectives and interests across the landscape. This breadth of expertise grounds priorities in real, on-the-ground needs and supports efficient project implementation. A strong planning process surfaces differing viewpoints early, allowing them to be addressed in project design and reducing the risk of delays or challenges later. Collaboratives may include tribes, local governments, nonprofit organizations, and others involved in land and water management and forest and community resilience.

The collaborative group must also be focused on a clear, well-defined landscape for project development and prioritization. Landscapes may be defined by jurisdictional boundaries (e.g. county, national forest, tribal lands), topography (e.g. watershed), ecological features (e.g. species habitat), community-centered considerations (e.g. population centers), or cultural relevance (e.g. Native American ancestral homelands). The landscape should be large enough to support meaningful outcomes, but not so large that projects are scattered and impacts are diluted. While there is no fixed minimum size, landscapes are generally expected to be at least the size of Hydrologic Unit Code 10 watershed (~100,000 acres).

A collaboratively prioritized list of projects
The collaborative group must have a collaboratively developed, prioritized project portfolio with projects in various stages of readiness. If implemented, the portfolio is expected to deliver multiple, measurable ecological and community benefits across a large landscape over a 5- to 7-year grant period.

Demonstrated capacity to administer and implement a landscape-scale program of work
The collaborative group must demonstrate strong capacity for both administration and on-the-ground implementation. It must include a member organization eligible to receive and manage grant funds or be structured so the collaborative itself is an eligible entity (see Eligibility below). The SNC may consider past performance with similar grant programs when evaluating a partnership's capacity.

Demonstrated readiness to act, including several million dollars in shovel-ready projects
The collaborative group's project portfolio must contain several million dollars' worth (est. $10 million or more) of shovel-ready projects with environmental compliance complete (CEQA and NEPA, if applicable).

Once SNC determines that a landscape is Investment Ready it will be eligible for Phase II.

Phase II: Evaluating Strength of Collaboratives and Programs of Work

All Investment Ready Landscapes represent strong investment opportunities, maintaining robust portfolios of projects that reflect locally defined needs and collaboratively developed priorities. To identify finalists, the SNC will further evaluate collaboratives to identify those that demonstrate exemplary collaborative structure and project development processes. Collaboratives must demonstrate organizational stability, a strategic and transparent approach to project identification and prioritization, effective project implementation, and strong alignment with state and SNC priorities. These include community protection, watershed and ecosystem health, rural economic development, sustainable recreation and tourism, conservation of natural and working lands, biodiversity, equity and inclusion, and climate adaptation.

This phase evaluates the quality and rigor of the collaborative's structure, membership, planning process and analysis, and project portfolio based on the five criteria described below. Collaboratives do not need to submit information to SNC during this phase. However, SNC may seek clarity by reaching out to the collaborative if SNC's existing knowledge about the collaborative's landscape assessment, partner engagement, decision-making, or project portfolio arise.

1. *Landscape-scale assessment of conditions and risks*
   The collaborative group has a complete and current assessment of landscape conditions based on best available data and science, local expertise, and/or traditional ecological knowledge, along with a plan and project portfolio that addresses risks and incorporates climate-change considerations.

2. *Broad-based participation*
   The collaborative group includes diverse partners representing multiple interests and areas of expertise; major landowners and/or land managers are represented.

3. *Clearly defined decision-making process*
   The collaborative has a clearly defined project selection process that is transparent, inclusive, and aligned with shared goals.

4. *Partnership capacity, sustainability, and institutional resilience*
   The collaborative group has member organizations that have demonstrated the capacity to administer a large grant, with a proven track record of successful project delivery. The collaborative group demonstrates institutional redundancy, or "bench strength" to ensure continuity beyond any single organization or individual.

5. *Tribal engagement*
   The collaborative group advances tribal priorities and interested tribes are actively involved in project design and prioritization.

6. *Portfolio alignment with state and local priorities*
   The project portfolio addresses risks identified in the landscape assessment, aligns with collaborative goals, and helps meet state and local objectives and complements portfolios from overlapping collaboratives. Collaborative groups are able to provide a detailed cost assessment and spatial data for 5-7 years' worth of priority projects within their portfolio.

Collaboratives determined by SNC to have met all of the above criteria will be identified as finalists for the LGP and will be contacted by SNC to advance to Phase III.

Phase III: Assessing Impacts

The third phase of the selection process consists of an interview, during which each finalist is evaluated on several criteria. These include the value proposition and public benefit of the proposed program of work, the ecological and socioeconomic outcomes, and the transformational potential of the initiative. Phase III evaluation criteria are detailed here:

1. *Completeness of the project portfolio*
   Assesses the extent to which the collaborative group possesses a clear narrative and proposed budget, supported by maps or other visual tools, describing the project portfolio, including specific treatment types, location, timing, acres, scientific support for the approach, cost estimates for planning and implementation project activities, and a proposed plan for the subset of the portfolio an LGP grant could fund.

2. *Capacity and readiness of the collaborative to implement at scale*
   Assesses the extent to which the collaborative group has a clear, feasible, timeline for advancing and implementing the project portfolio. Environmental compliance is in place for implementation activities. There is sufficient workforce capacity, funding (existing and anticipated), and a timeline for both implementation and future planning. The collaborative has identified respective roles and responsibilities of collaborative members with regards to grant administration and implementation. The partnership is aware of potential challenges and has considered possible solutions.

3. *Inclusion of tribal priorities*
   Assesses the extent to which tribal priorities have been incorporated in the project portfolio and tribal projects, workforce, or other priorities are included in the project scope and budget.

4. *Environmental/ecological benefits*
   Assesses the environmental benefits of the project portfolio and the degree of alignment between expected outcomes and state environmental and ecological priorities, including metrics for success.

5. *Socioeconomic benefits*
   Assesses the socioeconomic benefits of the project portfolio, including impacts on local economies, sustainable recreation, workforce development, use of local crews and contractors, use of residual biomass and other socioeconomic benefits expected to result from an LGP grant.

6. *Transformation potential*
   Assesses how an $8-12 million investment would be transformational for the landscape and the collaborative, including how matching funds or other resources would amplify impact. The collaborative can explain why large-scale investment is needed now and how such an investment would have an impact on landscape resilience. The collaborative has a sense of other funders who may have interest in the landscape and a willingness to work with them.

The criteria above will be the primary basis for recommending organizations to the SNC Governing Board for funding. The SNC may also consider additional factors, such as equitable distribution of funds across the region, opportunities to leverage funding from other agencies and partners, and input from the Wildfire Task Force and Department of Conservation RFFCP staff. Once potential grantees are identified, SNC will work with selected collaboratives to determine the suite of projects from the portfolio to be funded through the LGP.

Funding Source and Requirements

The primary funding source for the program is Climate Bond funding appropriated to the SNC under SB 101, the Budget Act of 2025. Approximately $45 million is available for initial award under the LGP.

If additional funding sources become available with purposes consistent with SNC's Strategic Plan, the Wildfire & Forest Resilience Task Force Action Plan, and the LGP, as described in these guidelines, the SNC may allocate those funding sources to the support of this grant program.

Disadvantaged Communities, Severely Disadvantaged Communities, and Vulnerable Populations

The Climate Bond requires that at least 40 percent of the total funds available be allocated for projects that provide meaningful and direct benefits to vulnerable populations or disadvantaged communities. Of this 40 percent, at least 10 percent of the total funds available shall be allocated for projects that provide meaningful and direct benefits to severely disadvantaged communities. The Climate Bond identifies disadvantaged and severely disadvantaged communities on the Disadvantaged Communities Map. Vulnerable populations, as defined in CA Pub Res Code § 90100 (2025) are not mapped. The SNC will evaluate adherence with these requirements when considering awards under the program.

Environmental Compliance Documents

The SNC requires all projects comply with CEQA at the time the Board authorizes a grant. Since the complexity of CEQA compliance will vary depending on the proposed project activities and the type of applicant, SNC will work with potential grantees to determine which CEQA documents will be required.

Eligible Costs

Direct Project Costs

For project costs to be eligible for reimbursement, the costs must be within the scope of the project, supported by appropriate documentation, and completed by the required deadline as identified in the grant agreement. Costs related to project reporting, required signage, and cultural monitoring are eligible costs.

Expenses for California Native American tribes and tribal entities to support their leadership of and participation in project activities, including cultural burning program implementation activities, and cultural monitoring are eligible costs.

Staff salaries and benefits directly related to project management and project implementation are eligible costs, but hourly rates billed to SNC must be equal to the actual compensation paid by the grantee to employees and cannot include administrative costs. Administrative costs must be calculated separately. Eligible costs include payment and administration of prevailing wage as required by Division 47 to the Public Resources Code, which generally requires that work done to reduce fuel for wildfires, when that work is publicly funded, must meet several labor standards beginning July 1, 2026.

Costs for travel and lodging directly related to the project are eligible, but may not exceed the current state lodging, per diem, and mileage reimbursement rates. Food and entertainment are not eligible expenses under this program. Please note that travel and related costs as part of a subcontract for project implementation are not subject to these limitations.

Grantees will be required to issue a press release and/or a short video and, as feasible, project signs to highlight the bond funded project and acknowledge SNC's support and the state funding source. Costs associated with media and signage are eligible direct project costs.

Administrative (Indirect) Costs

For grants awarded for projects under this program, SNC will reimburse the grantee's indirect costs. The grantee may request one of the following indirect cost rates, not to exceed 20 percent of direct project costs:

- The grantee's federal negotiated indirect cost rate, pursuant to its Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA).
- The 15 percent de minimis indirect cost rate specified in Part 200 of Title 2 of the Code of Federal Regulations.
- A rate negotiated by the grantee with another state agency within the last five years.
- A rate proposed by the grantee in the grantee's program application with the administering state agency if the grantee does not have an existing state rate.

Under special circumstances, with justified, documented need, the SNC executive officer may approve an indirect cost rate above 20 percent of direct project costs.

All indirect costs must be real, incurred costs. For example, if an organization is billing 20 percent in indirect costs, all of those funds need to be paying for indirect costs, and not for any other costs that are ineligible or unrelated. In the event of an audit, Grantees will need to be able to demonstrate that reported indirect costs were real incurred expenses.

In the event of an audit, projects with budgets that include administrative costs must be able to document the appropriateness of these expenses. If the applicant does not have an existing NICRA, a typical method for documentation of administrative overhead expenses is a Cost Allocation Plan (CAP). A CAP is a formal accounting plan used to calculate and document the method for recovering overhead costs. The SNC strongly recommends that grantees consult with an accounting professional to develop an appropriate method for calculating overhead rate and prepare a CAP.

Ineligible Costs

Examples of ineligible costs include, but are not limited to:

- Establishing or increasing a legal defense fund or endowment
- Monetary donations to other organizations
- Food or refreshments not part of a negotiated subcontract related to project implementation
- Costs associated with fundraising
- Any expenses incurred before a grant agreement is executed or after the project completion deadline, as identified in the grant agreement

Glossary of Terms

Unless otherwise stated, the terms used in these grant guidelines shall have the following meanings:

- Administrative Costs – Administrative costs, also called indirect costs, include any expense which is not directly related to project implementation. Similar to the traditional definition of "overhead," administrative costs include shared costs, such as rent, utilities, travel, per diem, office equipment, services such as internet and phone, shared bookkeeping costs, etc.
- Board – The governing body of the SNC as established by PRC Section 33321.
- CEQA – The California Environmental Quality Act as set forth in the PRC Section 21000 et seq. The CEQA is a law establishing policies and procedures that require agencies to identify, disclose to decision makers and the public, and attempt to lessen significant impacts to environmental and historical resources that may occur as a result of a proposed project to be undertaken, funded, or approved by a local or state agency.
- CEQA/NEPA Compliance – Activities an entity performs to meet the requirements of CEQA and/or NEPA.
- Collaborative – A forest collaborative as defined in PRC Section 4810: a functioning collaborative group that includes multiple persons or entities representing diverse interests, that is transparent and inclusive, and that has sufficient expertise, capacity, and scientific support to effectively plan, implement, and monitor landscape-level, ecological-based forest restoration activities.
- Disadvantaged Community (DAC) – a community with a median household income of less than 80 percent of the area average or less than 80 percent of statewide median household income.
- Eligible Costs – Expenses incurred by the grantee during the performance period of an approved agreement, which may be reimbursed by the SNC.
- Forest Health – A healthy forest is a forest that possesses the ability to sustain the unique species composition, processes, and ecological conditions that exist within it.
- Grant – Funds made available to a grantee for eligible costs during an agreement term.
- Grant Agreement – An agreement between the SNC and the grantee specifying the payment of funds by the SNC for the performance of the project scope according to the terms of the agreement by the grantee.
- Grantee – An entity that has an agreement with the SNC for grant funds.
- Grant / Project Scope – Description of the items of work to be completed with grant funds as described in the application form and cost estimate.
- Landscape – An area defined by jurisdictional boundaries, topography, ecological features, community-centered considerations, or cultural relevance. Landscapes vary in size but are small enough that projects remain interrelated and generally

50,000 acres or larger, or approximately the size of a Hydrologic Unity Code-10 watershed.

- Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA) – A legal agreement of the indirect cost rate negotiated between the federal government and an organization that reflects the indirect costs (facilities and administrative costs) and fringe benefit expenses incurred by the organization under a grant. In the absence of a NICRA, the grantee can use the de minimis rate of 15 percent of modified total direct costs.
- NEPA – The National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended. NEPA (https://ceq.doe.gov/) is a federal law requiring consideration of the potential environmental effects of a proposed project whenever a federal agency has discretionary jurisdiction over some aspect of that project.
- Nonprofit Organization – 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 as set forth in Pub. Resources Code Section 33302, subd. (e).
- Permitting – The process of obtaining any necessary regulatory approvals from appropriate governmental agencies to implement the project.
- Project – The work to be accomplished with grant funds.
- Public Agencies – Any city, county, district, joint powers authority, or state agency.
- Regional Entity – As defined in PRC Section 4208, a state conservancy, local government, tribal government, resource conservation district, joint powers authority, or nongovernmental organization with a history of implementing related projects, demonstrated capacity to work across regional partners, and ability to serve as fiscal administrators for the program.
- Regional Priority Plan Explorer (RPP Explorer) – An interactive database and map that shows where collaborative groups are working and provides information on membership, governance, project portfolios, and readiness for landscape-scale work. Regional RPPs are developed as part of a statewide capacity-tracking effort led by the Department of Conservation.
- Resilience – The ability of an ecosystem to regain structural and functional attributes that have suffered harm from stress or disturbance.
- Restoration – Activities that initiate, accelerate, or return the components and processes of a damaged site to previous historical ecological site conditions.
- Severely Disadvantaged Community (SDAC) – A community with a median household income of less than 60 percent of the area average or less than 60 percent of statewide median household income.
- Sierra-Cascade Region – The Sierra Nevada Region as defined in PRC Section 33302 (f).
- Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) – The Sierra Nevada Conservancy as defined in PRC Section 33302 (b).
- Tribal Entities – Includes any Native American 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.

- Vulnerable Population – A subgroup population within a region or community that faces a disproportionately heightened risk or increased sensitivity to impacts of climate change and that lacks adequate resources to cope with, adapt to, or recover from the changes.