

California Department of Conservation Statewide Watershed Program

Statewide Watershed Coordinator Grant Solicitation

Draft Guidelines

February 9, 2009

The California Department of Conservation (Department) is asking for your input to help develop guidelines for the upcoming Statewide Watershed Coordinator Grant Solicitation. The Department is seeking your input on the Draft Guidelines on matters that are the most substantive or critical where you currently have watershed management activities, or want to begin watershed management activities, to better manage natural resources in watersheds of interest to your organization.

Please review these Draft Guidelines and consider how a watershed coordinator would help your community achieve benefits to the natural resources in your watershed and realize your watershed management goals.

Comments should be sent in writing to the Dept. of Conservation - Statewide Watershed Program. Email: watershed@conservation.ca.gov. You may also mail your comments to:

Dept. of Conservation
Land Resource Protection
801 K Street, MS 18-01
Sacramento, CA 95814
Attn: Dan Wermiel

When providing comments, please include the following information:

Name
Organization
Phone
Email address
Location (Watershed and County)

If you have questions, please call Dan Wermiel (916) 324-9017.

Close of Public Comment Period: March 6, 2009

Purpose

To advance sustainable watershed-based management of California's natural resources using community-based strategies. By providing funding and support for watershed coordinator positions, the Statewide Watershed Program (Program) will help mobilize local communities and resources to advance watershed management that result in benefits to the natural resources of the State.

Background

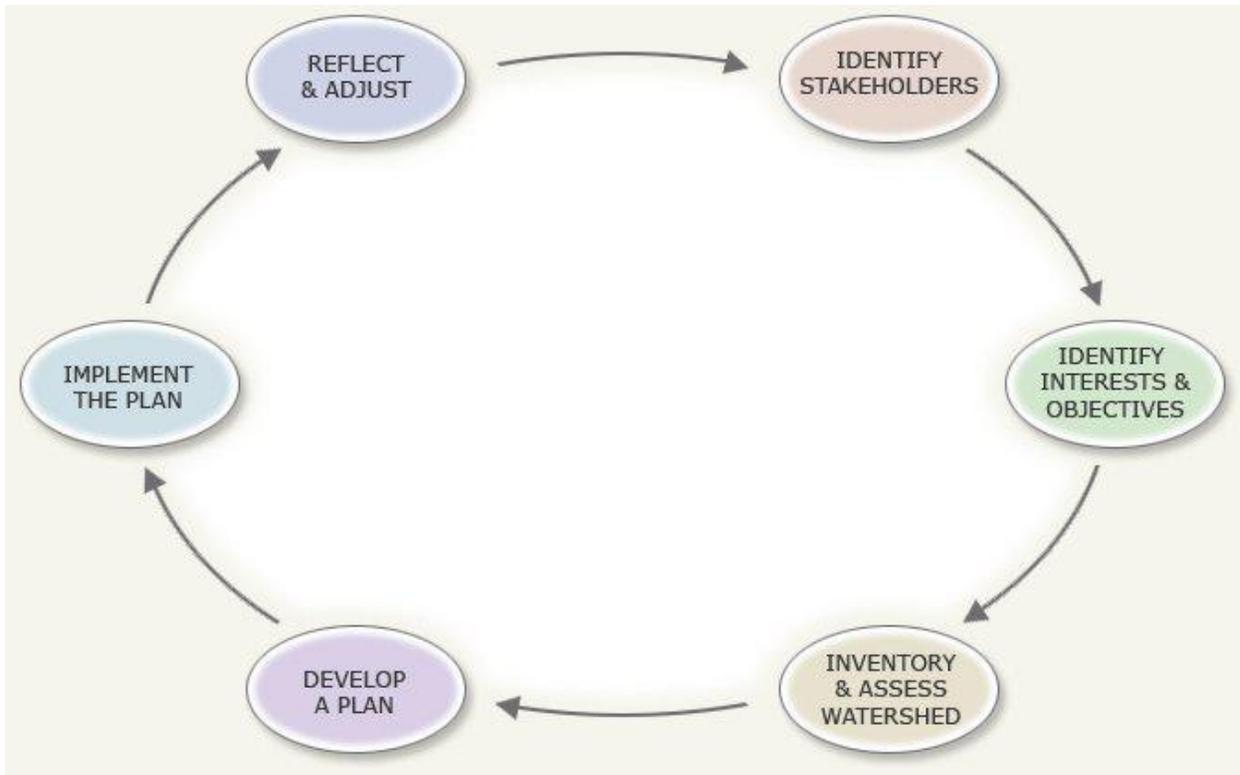
In 2000, the California Legislature approved a \$2 million pilot grant program to fund watershed coordinators through Resource Conservation Districts. The Department was authorized to administer the program. State funding was approved for two years and due to the success of the pilot program, the California Bay-Delta Authority (CBDA) partnered with the Department to extend the program for another 18 months. CBDA was the oversight authority for the CALFED Bay-Delta Program. In 2004, as the effectiveness and importance of the grant program became more evident, the Department again worked with CBDA to expand the grant program with CALFED funding from the Water Security, Clean Drinking Water, Coastal and Beach Protection Act of 2002 (Proposition 50). This program was continued in 2008, funded through Proposition 50 funds and is providing 43 grants for watershed coordination in the CALFED solution area. The parameters of the Proposition 50 funding were limited to improving watersheds which affect the CALFED Solution Area. The CALFED Solution Area includes watersheds that contribute to or import water through the Bay-Delta system.

The Department is pleased to be able to expand this grant program to provide funding for watershed coordination on a *statewide* basis. Funding for this solicitation will be provided through the Safe Drinking Water Bond of 2006 (Proposition 84). Funds will be made available to support coordination in watersheds throughout the State. The Department expects to have \$9 million available through this grant solicitation.

Watershed Management

Watershed management is the process of creating and implementing plans, programs, and projects to sustain and enhance watershed functions, which in turn, provide the goods, services and values desired by the community affected by the conditions within a watershed boundary.

The objective of watershed management is to increase and sustain a watershed's ability to provide for the diverse needs of the communities that depend on it, including local to regional to state and federal stakeholders.



The methodology to advance management of natural resources on a watershed basis is to support building of community capacity for the development of a watershed inventory generally consisting of information about the current condition of natural resources in the watershed. A watershed assessment compares the current conditions with desired conditions for the watershed, as defined by the community's goals and objectives, and to identify and quantify data gaps. A watershed management plan is then developed to identify actions that can be implemented to close the gap between current natural resource conditions and desired natural conditions in the watershed, and how success will be measured. The watershed management plan should not be confused with the actions required to implement it. In an effective watershed management process, plan implementation includes stakeholders that work within a network of partnerships or groups. No single group can effectively manage a watershed. After implementation of actions has been undertaken, continuous monitoring is required to determine the results of the actions, and is an integral component of effective watershed management. By analyzing information from the monitoring program, the watershed community can determine the outcomes and performance of the actions and identify appropriate adjustments to all aspects of the plan and implementation. In this way, there is a need for on-going sustainable coordinated watershed management to achieve the desired natural resource conditions within the watershed.

The Program recognizes that the current stages of watershed management are more advanced in some watersheds than others in the State. Some watersheds may be building the capacity to develop watershed assessments and plans, while others may be ready to implement watershed management plans and monitor outcomes and performance to improve management of the

natural resource conditions in the watersheds. The Program will support watershed coordination in all watersheds of the State regardless of the current stage of watershed management.

Program Expectations

The State can most effectively manage to achieve benefits to natural resources by working in concert with local communities, federal and local agencies using watersheds as a fundamental unit of management. Through supporting or directly providing the local leadership, management skills and use of technical expertise of a local watershed coordinator, the State can promote sustainable, collaborative stewardship with the purpose to benefit the natural resource conditions in the watersheds throughout California.

The primary duties of a watershed coordinator supported by this grant solicitation include, but are not limited to: (1) ensuring open and accurate sharing of information; (2) convening collaboration among and between various agencies, entities, groups, and individuals with interests in management of natural resources within the watershed, including environmental justice communities and Tribes located within the watersheds; (3) providing or assisting with the acquisition of necessary expertise; (4) reporting and measuring performance milestones; and (5) acting as a liaison between local communities and regional or statewide activities and programs.

The organization seeking funding for a watershed coordinator should work to form, develop, and/or enhance sustainable, locally-led watershed partnerships. The Program prefers to support local and community-based watershed coordination with an established local organization already involved in natural resources and watershed management within the watershed.

This grant should be considered an initial investment to support a local program that will work to benefit natural resource conditions through better management of the watersheds. The Program is interested in supporting watershed coordination that will continue beyond the three-year term of this grant. The Program has demonstrated performance where watershed coordination has provided tangible benefits to management of natural resources in watersheds in the State, only to have this investment stranded when the grant has ended and the watershed coordinator is not sustained. The Program does not guarantee, nor does it intend to, support with grant funds a watershed coordinator position beyond the term of grant. The Program prefers to support organizations that can utilize this grant money as an initial investment to develop or enhance sustainable local watershed partnerships and provide long-term support for watershed coordination.

The Program considers it advantageous if the organization that applies for a watershed coordinator will make this a position within the organization and the watershed coordinator an employee of the organization, rather than something separate such as a subcontractor working outside the organizational structure. By making this a position within the organization, the

Program believes there is a greater likelihood the position will be supported and sustained beyond the term of the initial investment made from this grant.

Guidelines

The basis for defining a watershed for this grant solicitation will be the 8-digit Hydrologic Unit Catalog (HUC) defined by United States Geological Survey (USGS). Any application for a watershed coordinator in an 8-digit HUC where a Program funded watershed coordinator is currently funded (2008 – 2011) will be deemed ineligible (Appendix A).

Eligibility

The following are eligibility requirements under this grant solicitation:

- Nonprofit organizations- any corporation organized under Section 501 (c)(3) of the federal internal revenue code and incorporated within the State of California.
- Special Districts and local governments including cities, counties, cities and counties and Joint Power Authorities formed from these entities.
- The Program prefers to support local and community-based watershed coordination with an established local organization already involved in natural resources and watershed management in the watershed.
- Each proposal may request up to one full-time watershed coordinator position.
- Applicants may submit more than one proposal.
- No more than one full-time watershed coordinator position will be funded in any HUC (Appendix A).
- No additional watershed coordinators or additional grants for a watershed coordinator will be funded in any of the HUC's already funded under the 2008 – 2011 watershed coordinator grant solicitation (Appendix A).
- The Program prefers to support the equivalent of one full-time watershed coordinator position per USGS Hydrologic Unit Catalog (HUC) 8-digit watershed in the State.
- A watershed coordinator may work in an area consisting of more than one HUC. The Program prefers to support watershed coordination based on a whole watershed approach instead of watershed coordination based on partial watersheds such as an upper and a lower watershed context.
- Although not preferred, the Program will accept applications for watershed coordinators to work in watersheds sub-divided in areas smaller than a single HUC provided that there is adequate rationale.

Geographic and Program Priorities

The Program preference is to support watershed coordination where it has not been previously supported and is needed to meet the interests of the State. It is the desire of the Program to have watershed coordinators working within each of the 10 hydrologic regions of the State (Appendix B). Watersheds where coordination has previously been supported, but not currently supported (2008-2011, Appendix A), can participate in this solicitation. Preference for funding will be given to otherwise competitive applications according to the following categories:

Category 1 – Watersheds that are outside the Bay-Delta Solution Area and have previously been ineligible for Program support. The Program prefers to support watershed coordinators within these watersheds.

Category 2 – Watersheds located within the Bay-Delta Program Solution Area that have not previously been successful in placing watershed coordinators because of limited CALFED Program objectives on which to develop a competitive proposal. The Program prefers to support watershed coordinators in these watersheds.

Hydrologic regions with Category 1 and Category 2 watersheds are: North Coast, North Lahontan, South Lahontan, Colorado River, Tulare Lake, Central Coast and South Coast (Appendix B).

Category 3 – Watersheds in the Bay-Delta Program Solution Area that meet the CALFED Program objectives and have had a direct opportunity to participate in the previous watershed coordinator solicitations.

Hydrologic regions with Category 3 watersheds are: Sacramento River, San Joaquin River, and San Francisco Bay (Appendix B).

Category 3 watersheds with existing Program funded watershed coordinators (Appendix A) are ineligible to receive Program funding to support an additional watershed coordinator from any organization. An organization currently receiving funding for a watershed coordinator in a particular HUC may apply for funding to support a watershed coordinator in a different HUC. The Program prefers that the organization will focus on finding support to sustain the existing watershed coordinator beyond the term of the current grant. However, the Program will support an additional watershed coordinator from such an organization, provided the additional watershed coordinator is within a different HUC than that of the current watershed coordinator. The applicant organization should provide evidence of sustaining the currently funded watershed coordinator, in addition to that of the additional watershed coordinator.

Applications from Category 1 and Category 2 watersheds will be evaluated independently of applications from Category 3 watersheds. Approximately 80% of funds will be made available

to support qualifying competitive proposals for watershed coordination in Category 1 and Category 2 watersheds. Approximately 20% of funds will be made available to support qualifying competitive proposals for watershed coordination in Category 3 watersheds.

Authorized Costs and Matching Funds

The Program prefers to maximize the number of watershed coordinators funded through this solicitation. It is the intent of the Program that this investment will lead to sustainability of the watershed coordinator position beyond the term of the grant. The Program considers that requiring local matching funds provides a reasonable approach to maximize available funds, and also contributes towards sustaining the watershed coordinator beyond the term of the grant. The objectives of the match requirement are to: (1) improve coordination of watershed management activities within a maximum number of watersheds across the State, and (2) support sustainability of the watershed coordinator position.

- Allowable Costs: Watershed Coordinator salaries and associated costs that directly support the position. Maximum award amount per grant: \$210,000 total (three-year period).
- Non-allowable Costs: Project-related costs.
- Allowable Matching Funds: cash and/or in-kind. All cash and in-kind matching funds must directly support the watershed coordinator position.
- Mandatory 25% minimum match of amount requested. Match can be cash and/or in-kind and will be weighed equally.
- The Program may reduce or waive the matching requirement if the watershed coordinator is deemed in an economically disadvantaged community as defined by the State of California.
- Other State grant funds, regardless of the funding source, are not eligible as match.

Watershed Maps

The Program will use the USGS 8-digit Hydrological Unit Catalog (HUC) delineation to define the watersheds of the State where watershed coordinators will be supported (Appendix A). This will ensure continuity with the current and past watershed coordinator solicitations that the Program has supported.

Quantifiable Performance Measures

The Program requires the applicant organization to include a comprehensive work plan for the watershed coordinator. The work plan must include measurable benchmarks for the performance of the watershed coordinator for the full three-year term of the grant. The work plan must be detailed to clearly ensure accountability to the State.

The watershed coordinator grant provides funding to support the watershed coordinator position and does not provide funding to support projects within the watershed. The watershed coordinator should work to acquire additional funding to carry out planning, implementation, monitoring or other priorities within the particular watershed. A required performance measurement within the work plan for the watershed coordinator is how much additional funding is brought into the watershed by the watershed coordinator, either through grant writing, match, fund raising, or other sources.

The work plan should also describe how the watershed coordinator will work toward sustaining the position beyond the term of the grant and will report on the performance of meeting this expectation.

Evaluation Criteria

Applications will be evaluated on how well it responds to the requirements of the solicitation to support watershed coordinators that will advance watershed management benefiting the natural resources in the watersheds of the State. Specific criteria include:

- Evidence of measureable benefits to natural resource conditions in the watershed, and sustainability of the benefits achieved.
- Development and support of watershed partnerships and support of collaboration amongst the various participants.
- Variety of organizations and technical expertise of the participants in management of the watershed, and the strength and diversity of participants in the partnerships. This includes participation of state, federal and local agencies; environmental groups; landowners; industry; interest groups; special districts; researchers; educators; and other concerned citizens in the watershed.
- Coordination and effectiveness of liaison between local communities and regional or statewide activities and programs. The degree of inter-jurisdictional coordination.
- Demonstrated familiarity with watershed management principles.
- Performance measurement and reporting of watershed conditions.
- The scope of work and work plan, including performance measures and benchmarks of effectiveness.
- Watershed work area, given the scope of work and performance measures.

- Information acquisition, sharing, or identification of data gaps to result in better informed decision-making in the watershed.
- Sustainability of the watershed coordinator position beyond the term of the grant. Preference shall be given to organizations that employ the watershed coordinator as opposed to subcontracting the position.
- Inclusion of environmental justice communities and Tribes in the management of the watershed.
- Strategies to obtain additional funding to benefit the watershed.
- Demonstrated ability of the applicant to effectively administer funding and deliver the program.
- Proposed budget is competitive and reasonable in supporting the work plan, taking into account the amount requested and match provided (lower grant amount requested and greater match provided will increase competitiveness).

Schedule

The Statewide Watershed Program anticipates release of the Statewide Watershed Coordinator Grant Solicitation on **April 15, 2009**. Release of the solicitation may be delayed due to circumstances beyond the control of the Program.

Appendices

- A. Watershed Coordinator Funding Map 2008-2011
- B. Map of 10 Hydrologic Regions of the State