



SACRAMENTO - SAN JOAQUIN

DELTA CONSERVANCY

A California State Agency

**Nature Based Solutions: Wetland Restoration
(NBS:WR)**

Grant Program

Solicitation Notice

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I. Background

The Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Conservancy (Conservancy) is a primary state agency in the implementation of ecosystem restoration in the Delta and Suisun Marsh and supports efforts that advance environmental protection and the economic well-being of Delta residents. The Conservancy works collaboratively and in coordination with local communities leading efforts to protect, enhance, and restore the Delta's economy, agriculture and working landscapes, and environment for the benefit of the Delta region, its local communities, and the citizens of California.

The Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta (Delta) is a unique natural resource of local, state, and national significance, and has a distinct natural and cultural heritage. The Delta is a 1,300-square mile estuary, the largest on the west coast of North and South America. It is home to more than 500,000 people and is a world-class recreational destination. Lands in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta are critical in California's urgent efforts to build a resilient, equitable, and carbon neutral future. Healthy landscapes can sequester and store carbon; limit future greenhouse gas emissions into the atmosphere; protect people and nature from the impacts of climate change; and build resilience to future impacts of climate change. To support California's climate change goals, the Delta Conservancy is seeking proposals for projects to restore, conserve, and protect natural and working lands health; and deliver on the State's climate change goals.

Chaptered on September 6, 2022, the Amended Budget Act of 2022 (Assembly Bill 179, Item 3875-101-0001 of Section 111) provided the Conservancy with \$36,000,000 for projects that support Nature Based Solutions: Wetland Restoration (NBS: WR). Of the total up to \$34,200,000 is available for projects.

II. Goals of the Program

The goals of the Nature Based Solutions: Wetland Restoration funding are to support restoration, conservation, and climate resilience for wetlands in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta. The Delta region includes over 150,000 acres of highly organic peat soils that are significantly subsided to depths of 20 to 30 feet below sea level. This subsidence threatens the State and Federal water projects, Delta communities and the region's rich agricultural production. Subsidence is the result of oxidation of the peat soils and results in over 1.5 million tons of CO₂ emissions annually. Re-wetting the peat soils stops subsidence and resulting carbon emissions.

Example projects include, but are not limited to:

- Managed and tidal wetland restoration
- Crop conversion to rice cultivation
- Technical assistance to access the Voluntary Carbon Market
- Planning to prepare for and support eligible projects (e.g., scoping, design, environmental compliance, science)
- Land acquisition or easement

III. Proposal Submission

The Conservancy's NBS: WR Program is a noncompetitive grant program without proposal submission deadlines. The Conservancy will use its [General Grant Guidelines](#) to administer grants using NBS: WR funds. Applicants should review the General Grant Guidelines prior to applying for funds. Interested parties should tailor their applications to reflect the funding specific information provided herein. This section provides a summary of the application and review process.

Concept Proposal

Concept proposals may be submitted at any time to initiate consideration of a project by the Conservancy. Applicants must submit a concept proposal using the Concept Proposal Form (program materials will be available on the Conservancy's website when the program is opened). The Conservancy will review each concept proposal as it is submitted. Once reviewed, the Conservancy will confer with the applicant to discuss the project concept, request additional information as needed, and discuss next steps. An in-person meeting and/or a site visit may also be deemed necessary.

Viability Assessment

Based on information gathered during the concept proposal stage, along with input from technical experts if needed, Conservancy staff will evaluate the viability of the proposed project by assessing if the proposed project:

- Is technically and financially feasible;
- Is likely to provide locally-supported benefits to the Delta; and
- Will significantly advance the Conservancy's NBS: WR priorities.

Full Proposal

If Conservancy staff determines that a project concept appears to be viable, staff will work with the applicant to develop the concept into a full proposal.

Proposal Assessment

Conservancy staff will continually assess the project based on the program criteria as they work with the applicant to develop the project proposal. Conservancy staff will consult external experts as needed.

Conservancy staff will not recommend that the Conservancy Board fund a proposal unless the above criteria have been addressed to the satisfaction of the Conservancy and the applicant.

Board Consideration

If the above criteria have been addressed to the satisfaction of the Conservancy and the applicant and a proposal is assessed to be complete, Conservancy staff will make a recommendation to the Board for consideration of funding.

NOTE: The Conservancy will consider and may prioritize projects based on the geographic distribution, benefits related to disadvantaged and severely disadvantaged communities, reasonableness of costs, availability of funding, and diversity of project types.

IV. Evaluation Criteria

Full proposals will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

1. Project Design

Are the project's purpose, goals, deliverables, and schedule clear? Is the project well designed to meet the needs that the project addresses?

2. Public Benefits

Will the project provide multiple tangible, enduring, public benefits with a high likelihood of being realized? Does the project have reasonable performance measurements and a clear plan for tracking them? Will the project benefit disadvantaged or severely disadvantaged communities?

3. Alignment with State and Other Priorities

Does the project align with priorities identified in the following:

- The Conservancy's mission, governing statute, and strategic plan
- The Delta Plan
- Economic Sustainability Plan for the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta
- Other relevant local, regional, State, and federal plans

4. Project Readiness

Is the project ready to proceed promptly if funded? For planning projects, will planning activities advance the project toward implementation in a timely manner? For implementation projects, how complete is project planning, including the status of CEQA and permitting efforts?

5. Community and Institutional Support

Does the project have public and relevant institutional support at the local, regional, State, or federal scale? Is the local community or are other stakeholders engaged in project planning or delivery? For planning projects, is there a plan to develop community support?

6. Cost Share

Is cost share provided for the project?

7. Project Budget

Is the budget adequate and reasonable for the project? Are costs clearly identified and justified?

8. Project Team

Does the project team have sufficient experience and capacity to implement the project and to manage a state grant? Have necessary partnerships been developed?

9. Long-Term Management

For planning projects, are next steps identified for movement towards an implementation project? For implementation projects, is a plan clearly identified for long-term management and sustainability of the project for a minimum of 15 years?

10. Climate Change Resilience

Describe the potential vulnerabilities of the project site to climate change effects. How will the project account for and provide adaptation and/or resiliency to potential climate change effects?

11. Scientific Merit and Performance Measures

For projects that include a natural resource protection component please answer the following: what is the scientific basis of the proposed project including scientific literature, studies, or expert opinion that has been consulted, and how is best available science being considered and adopted?

V. Contact

For more information: <http://deltaconservancy.ca.gov/grant-program/>

If you have questions, please contact the Conservancy at Contact@DeltaConservancy.ca.gov or (916) 375-2084.