

WILDLIFE CONSERVATION BOARD

University of California Natural Reserve System Grant Program
Proposition 68 Proposal Solicitation Notice



Applications are accepted continuously

Submit Application Form to James.Croft@wildlife.ca.gov

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The Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) is inviting applications for matching grants that may be awarded to the University of California Natural Reserve System (NRS) for land acquisition and/or for the construction and development of facilities that will be used for research and training to improve the management of natural lands and the preservation of California's wildlife resources.

This Proposal Solicitation Notice (PSN) for the University of California Reserves Program (program), provides application information specific to this program. Up to \$9.25 million may be awarded in grants selected through this PSN (\$750,000 of the original \$10 million allocation is withheld for WCB program administration costs). Applicants should thoroughly review the [WCB Proposition 68 Guidelines](#) (Guidelines).

Questions related to this PSN may also be directed to WCB's UC Reserves Program Manager via e-mail at James.Croft@wildlife.ca.gov.

BACKGROUND

WCB is an independent state board with the authority to carry out programs that benefit wildlife conservation in California (California Fish and Game Code 1300, et seq.). WCB's three main conservation functions are land acquisition, habitat restoration, and development of wildlife-oriented public access facilities. WCB promotes this work through many [conservation programs](#).

In June 2018, voters passed the California Drought, Water, Parks, Climate, Coastal Protection, and Outdoor Access for All Act of 2018 (Proposition 68) which identified a need for climate adaptation and resiliency projects. Among other things, Proposition 68 stated that "Up to ten million dollars (\$10,000,000) may be granted to the University of California Natural Reserve System for matching grants for acquisition of land, construction and development of research facilities to improve the management of natural lands, for preservation of California's wildlife resources, and to further research related to climate change. The Wildlife Conservation Board shall establish a matching grant requirement for grants awarded pursuant to this subdivision." ([PRC 80111c](#)).

The mission of the NRS is to contribute to the understanding and wise management of the Earth and its natural systems by supporting university-level teaching, research, and public service at protected areas throughout California.

This PSN is WCB's first invitation for proposals to be funded through Proposition 68 for the University of California Natural Reserve System within the state of California.

This PSN will be open continuously and will fund projects until the above allocation is fully expended.

GENERAL PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

Eligible Entities

The nine general campuses within University of California system are eligible to submit grant proposals in response to this PSN to carry out projects on reserves designated within the University of California Natural Reserve System.

Matching Grants

Funds distributed through this program are being made available on a matching basis. The overall goal is a 25% match for the entire program amount. Other resource-related bond funds provided by the California Natural Resources Agency (CNRA) are not eligible to the University of California (University) for use as matching funds. On some projects, match may exceed 25% and on others, match may be less than 25%. The program goal will be to maintain this overall 25% funding match as close as possible from project to project.

For general evaluation purposes and to ensure this goal is kept, each project should strive to attain at a minimum, a 25% match of funds. In cases where the total program match requirement falls substantially below 25%, this may impact subsequent projects by requiring a substantially larger matching fund requirement. WCB will track the overall 25% funding match over the life of the program.

Suitable Matching Fund Sources

- **Capital**
 - Sources of suitable matching funding, including, but not limited to, the following:
 - Funds and/or grant monies designated for the project (e.g., approved National Science Foundation or other grant; irrevocable pledge by a donor, or irrevocable campus commitment to support operation and maintenance of the project).
 - Endowments
 - New endowments whose income will be used specifically to manage, maintain or operate the project funded under the grant; or
 - A portion of an existing endowment, whose income is dedicated solely to manage, maintain or operate the project funded under the grant. In the latter situation, WCB must approve the mechanism by which the University will “dedicate” a portion of an existing endowment.
- **Value of land and/or other real property interest (e.g. conservation easement)**
 - Land and/or other real property interest that has been donated or transferred to the University, or irrevocably pledged by a transferor/donor, except such land or interest, or any portion thereof, that had been acquired by the transferor/donor with resource-related bonds provided by CNRA. In other words, if 40% of the acquisition was funded by state resource-related bonds, 40% of the appraised value may not be used as a match, but 60% of the appraised value will qualify as a match. The land and/or other real property interest that qualifies as a match must remain a part of the NRS for the life of the project.
 - Any acquired land and/or other real property interest that is the basis for the “match” for a facilities grant must be conveyed after June 5, 2018, and its conveyance must be intended to support the reserve for which a grant is sought.
 - Where land and/ or other real property interest transferred to a particular NRS reserve provides the underlying match, an approved facilities grant based on this appraised

value may be used for facilities projects on the land transferred and/or elsewhere on the same reserve, which, for some reserves, may include non-contiguous reserve lands.

- To substantiate values, a fair market value appraisal of the land and/or other real property interest, reviewed and approved by the Department of General Services (DGS), may be required. Where such an appraisal has been obtained by the donor, University, or another party around the time of this transfer, this appraisal may be used to establish the value of the match in order to provide reasonable certainty in the project planning. This appraisal, however, may not be adjusted later either in an increase or decrease in value to reflect subsequent changes in the valuation of the land and/or other real property interest.
- **In-kind services and/or materials.** (May include turnkey projects.)
Proposals should address the following information, as pertinent:
 - Type of services that will be or have been provided (e.g., architectural or engineering plans; labor);
 - Number of hours the services will be or have been provided, and the hourly rate associated with the services (may include the services of volunteers or University employees);
 - Value of materials donated for the facilities project (e.g., lumber, building supplies, windows, etc.); or
 - Any combination of the above.
 - In-kind services and/or materials not already received or secured must be irrevocably committed or pledged to the University in writing.

An accounting and verification that any of the match sources above has been contributed, donated or expended to support the project will be required by the end of the project (i.e., paid invoices, deposits into escrow, recorded deeds, cancelled checks or other appropriate supporting documents).

Project Types

Each of the following project types are appropriate for matching grants, provided that the land and/or facilities so funded will be used for research and training to improve the management of natural lands, for preservation of California's wildlife resources, and to further research related to climate change. These project types may be combined into one overall project.

Acquisition of land

- May include partial donation (e.g., bargain sale); and certain interests in real property (e.g., conservation easements)
- Purchase price at fair market value (see below)
- Projects may include documented expenses related to land acquisition, such as title-related costs (including title insurance), appraisals (governed by WCB and State requirements), various due diligence assessments, and environmental reviews

Acquisitions must be from willing sellers and at a price that does not exceed fair market value, as set forth in an appraisal approved by the Department of General Services. Development features on the property, such as the locations and size of building envelopes, must be identified at the time of application. Any future change of development features identified at the time of application, or the

request for new development features, may result in the project's ineligibility for funding. The appraisal may be completed after proposal selection. If the appraised value is less than the amount specified in the proposal, the project may proceed. If the appraised value is greater than the amount in the proposal, the project may proceed if the applicant secures other funding (i.e., not part of WCB's award) to cover the difference.

A Phase I Environmental Site Assessment is not required per se. WCB highly recommends all applicants complete a Phase I prior to acquisition of a property, but it is not a general requirement. However, if a property has a history of contamination or a site inspection reveals potential environmental conditions, WCB will require the applicant to complete a Phase I, and any additional environmental testing, to determine the suitability of a property for acquisition with WCB funds.

Detailed information about WCB acquisition policies and requirements (e.g., Baseline Conditions Report) can be found on WCB's [Grant Documents and Templates](#) webpage.

Construction and development of research facilities

- New structures, including trailers or modular/prefab buildings which must be installed as permanent structures
- Renovation, improvement, expansion or retrofit of existing structures
- Construction of new infrastructure, or renovation, improvement, expansion, demolition or retrofit of existing infrastructure necessary to support any reserve facility – may include, but not limited to: roads, utility/telecom lines, fences, gates, water pumps, wells, water purification systems, fire suppression structures, septic systems, solar panels and associated solar panel infrastructure.
- Fixtures and appliances – only if part of a larger project and having a useful life of at least five years

If an approved construction and development project requires additional funding, a request for additional funding from the applicant campus will first be reviewed and approved by the UCNRS Executive Director, then submitted to WCB for review. Approval to add funds to an existing grant will require a WCB board action.

Combination of land acquisition and facilities projects

Allowed Costs

Additional allowed costs may include, but are not limited to:

- Site surveys and planning activities
- Environmental compliance and permitting activities, including all associated fees
- Design, engineering, construction and construction management activities
- Appraisal, title, or escrow costs
- Travel costs specifically identified in the grant budget
- Project administration costs (limited to 10% of the total grant amount, not to exceed \$50,000) directly associated with the project including, but not limited to:

- Campus and reserve staff project oversight
- Billing and invoicing
- Project management/coordination
- Contingency costs may be included to cover unexpended cost increases or unforeseen project related costs. Budgeted contingency amounts will vary based on individual project assessments. Use of contingency funds must be approved by WCB in writing.

Ineligible Costs

Ineligible costs include, but are not limited to:

- Indirect costs (also known as overhead or administrative costs): these include operation costs not associated directly to the implementation of the project, such as central administrative staff and overhead.
- Appliances with useful lives of less than five years and not part of a larger project
- Furniture
- Normal facilities repairs, maintenance or regular replacement of equipment
- All costs incurred outside of the grant agreement term
- Travel costs not specifically identified in the grant budget
- Out of state travel without prior written authorization from WCB
- Student tuition and/or registration fees
- Purchase of electronics or other equipment not specifically identified in the grant agreement

APPLICATION PROCESS

All project proposals will describe how the project will contribute towards research and training to improve the management of natural lands for the preservation of California's wildlife resources and/or to further research related to climate change. All projects must comply with applicable NRS Administrative Handbook guidelines and all other University policies (e.g. land acquisition projects must comply with NRS Admin. Handbook Chapters 6-8 regarding adding new land to existing reserves). The project proponent must obtain prior project approvals by officials at the managing campus, the NRS Executive Director, and The Regents of the University of California (or its delegate) as necessary. The NRS Executive Director will determine the order that proposals are submitted to WCB for matching grants.

While applications are accepted on a continuous basis, WCB holds a minimum of four meetings annually (typically February, May, August, and November) where the board may consider awarding funds for proposed projects. WCB will review all received applications to ensure they comply with program requirements and meet program eligibility criteria. Projects that meet these requirements will be scheduled for Board consideration. The University will be notified as to when the project will be considered by the Board. After the approval by the Board, the applicant cannot begin to encumber WCB funds until it receives a formal "notice to proceed", which normally will be provided approximately five weeks following board approval.

Application Form

To qualify for funding consideration, a complete application package must be submitted (see Forms and Templates section of this document). First, project proponents must submit their application to NRS Systemwide Office (currently send to: Michael Kisgen, Associate Director, Michael.Kisgen@ucop.edu). After review and approval, the NRS Executive Director (or their proxy) will issue the proponent a Letter

of Support. This Letter must be included to be considered a complete application package. Next, project proponents submit their complete application package, including the Letter of Support, via e-mail to the WCB UC Reserves Program Manager (currently send to: James Croft, James.Croft@wildlife.ca.gov) with “UCNRS Proposition 68 Application” and the Project Title in the subject line.

Budget

Budgets must be submitted with the application by completing the UCNRS Prop 68 – Budget Worksheets (see Forms and Templates section of this document). Project tasks identified in the budget worksheets should be consistent with the project narrative and schedule. The budget worksheets should identify any non-WCB contributions (i.e., cash or in-kind services) to be used as cost share or match.

Advance Funds

WCB may provide advance funds (Advance) for planning and implementation projects (not acquisition projects) that serve Disadvantaged Communities. After grant execution, grantee may request a single Advance of up to 25% of the grant award. Grantee must submit the Advance Funds Request before submitting any reimbursement requests under the grant agreement. Grantee shall report use of Advance through the disbursement request process (i.e., modified disbursement template) and WCB shall disburse the remainder of the grant award in arrears.

Community Access

Proposition 68 defined community access as “engagement programs, technical assistance, or facilities that maximize safe and equitable physical admittance, especially for low-income communities, to natural or cultural resources, community education, or recreational amenities” ([PRC 80002b](#)). Capital outlay improvements for community access-related project components should be identified as a separate task in the “Budget Justification” Budget Worksheet and may comprise up to 5% of the grant amount from WCB.

Serving Disadvantaged Communities

Proposition 68 requires that at least 20 percent of the chapter funds available be allocated for projects serving severely disadvantaged communities. Projects that directly benefit a severely disadvantaged community and/or are located within a severely disadvantaged community will score more points through the “Serving Disadvantaged Communities” proposal evaluation criterion.

Proposition 68 defines a severely disadvantaged community as “a community with a median household income less than 60 percent of the statewide average.” The Department of Water Resources has developed an interactive [Disadvantaged Communities Mapping Tool](#) which shows the location and boundaries of disadvantaged communities in the state.

Applicants should use the following two-step process to evaluate whether their proposed project will benefit one or more severely disadvantaged communities.

Step 1 – Determine whether a majority ($\geq 50\%$) of the proposed project area is located within a severely disadvantaged community. Applicants may use boundary data from the census place, census tract, or census block group geography levels to determine whether the project is located within a severely disadvantaged community, based on the geography that is the most representative for that community.

Step 2 – Determine whether the proposed project will provide benefits to a severely disadvantaged community. If the proposed project meets one or more of the following criteria, it will be considered to provide benefits to a severely disadvantaged community.

- Project preserves, restores, or enhances a site that allows public access, enhances public recreational opportunities (e.g., fishing, hiking, biking, bird watching), and is within 1 mile of a severely disadvantaged community
- Project significantly reduces flood risk to one or more severely disadvantaged communities
- Project reduces exposure to local environmental contaminants (e.g., water quality contaminants) within a severely disadvantaged community
- Project includes recruitment, agreements, policies, or other approaches that are consistent with federal and state law and result in at least 25% of project work hours performed by residents of a severely disadvantaged community
- Project includes recruitment, agreements, policies, or other approaches that are consistent with federal and state law and result in at least 10% of project work hours performed by residents of a severely disadvantaged community participating in job training programs which lead to industry-recognized credentials or certifications

California Conservation Corps/California Association of Local Conservation Corps Services

The California Conservation Corps (CCC) is a state agency with local operations throughout the state. The California Association of Local Conservation Corps (CALCC) is the representative for certified local conservation corps. To the extent feasible, a project whose application includes the use of services of the CCC or certified community conservation corps, as defined in Section 14507.5 of the Public Resources Code, shall be given preference for receipt of a grant. The CCC has developed a [Corps Consultation Review Document](#) to help determine whether it is feasible for CCC or CALCC to provide services for the proposed project.

Maintenance and Management

Construction and development project proposals are required to include a Long-Term Management Plan (LTMP) that describes how the project area will be managed for a minimum of 25 years to deliver enduring, sustainable benefits consistent with the purposes of the grant. The LTMP should identify funding mechanisms and parties responsible for conducting maintenance and management activities. Acquisition projects may be required to provide LTMPs.

If a LTMP is not available for the project, one may be developed as a grant deliverable. However, if a LTMP is included as a grant deliverable, the project proposal should still describe a general strategy that addresses these maintenance and management considerations.

GRANT REQUIREMENTS

By submitting an application, project proponents understand and agree to all requirements and responsibilities detailed in this PSN and the Guidelines (e.g., Sections “5.0 Project Approval and Implementation” and Section 6.0 “General Program Requirements”).

Acquisitions

Acquisition of any interest in real property (e.g., fee title or conservation easement) must be from a willing seller. Sale price must not exceed fair market value, as set forth in an appraisal approved by DGS.

Detailed information about WCB acquisition policies and requirements (e.g., Baseline Conditions Report) can be found on WCB's [Grant Documents and Templates](#) webpage.

Environmental Compliance and Permitting

Activities funded under the Program must comply with all applicable laws and regulations. Several local, state, tribal and federal agencies may have permitting or other approval authority over projects that are eligible for grant funding. The applicant is responsible for obtaining all permits, approvals, reviews, etc. necessary to carry out the proposed work.

Projects that are undertaken to meet mitigation obligations, or projects that are under an enforcement action by a regulatory agency, will not be considered for funding.

Proposals for projects that are subject to CEQA and NEPA must identify the state and federal lead agencies and provide documentation that the agency or agencies have accepted the role. CEQA/NEPA compliance must be complete 15 days before WCB meets to consider funding approval. If CEQA/NEPA compliance for a proposed project is not complete at time of proposal submission, WCB will determine the likelihood of CEQA/NEPA completion by the anticipated board meeting date based upon the applicant's schedule for and progress toward completion. Applicants must provide environmental documents and lead agency compliance, such as an Environmental Impact Report and a Notice of Determination, upon request.

Data Management

Environmental data collected under this grant program must be made visible, accessible, and independently understandable to general users in a timely manner, except where limited by law, regulation, policy or security requirements. Applicants should account for the resources necessary to implement data management activities in the project budget. Projects generating environmental data must include data management activities that support incorporation of those data into statewide data systems, where applicable.

Unless otherwise stipulated, all data collected and/or created through WCB grant funds shall be required as a deliverable and will become the property of WCB. A condition of final payment shall include the delivery of all related data. Geospatial data must be delivered in an [ArcGIS](#)-compatible format where applicable and documented with metadata in accordance with the [CDFW Minimum Data Standards](#).

Land Tenure/Site Control

Any project on non-university-owned lands will require written evidence of the University's legal right to use the reserve land for the life of the proposed project.

When an applicant does not have tenure at the time of proposal submission, but intends to establish tenure via an agreement that will be signed prior to grant execution, the applicant must submit a template copy of the proposed agreement, memorandum of understanding (MOU), or permission form at the time of proposal submission. Once a project has been awarded, the applicant must submit documentation of land tenure before a complete grant agreement can be executed.

WCB and its representatives shall have the right to access the project site at least once every 36 months for acquisitions, and for all other grants at least once every 12 months from the start date of the grant for the life of the project. WCB shall provide advance notice to Grantee and landowners prior to accessing the project site.

FORMS AND TEMPLATES

Requirements as identified in the forms below are mandatory unless stated otherwise. Applicants must use the forms referenced below to apply or the application may be deemed incomplete and ineligible for funding. Links to these forms can also be found on WCB's Grant Opportunities page at <https://wcb.ca.gov/Grants>.

- Prop 68 UCNRS Grant Program – [Application Form](#)
- Prop 68 UNCRS Grant Program – [Budget Worksheets](#)

For questions regarding this PSN, please contact WCB at James.Croft@wildlife.ca.gov.

REFERENCES

PRC 80321f. PUBLIC RESOURCES CODE, DIVISION 45. California Drought, Water, Parks, Climate, Coastal Protection, and Outdoor Access For All Act of 2018 [80000 - 80173], CHAPTER 10. Climate Preparedness, Habitat Resiliency, Resource Enhancement, and Innovation [80130 - 80137].