

PROPOSITION 84
AGRICULTURAL WATER QUALITY GRANT PROGRAM
REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS NOTICE
December 8, 2008
APPLICATIONS ARE DUE BY 5:00 P.M.
ON FRIDAY, JANUARY 30, 2009

I. INTRODUCTION

The State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board) is administering a nonpoint source grant program to improve agricultural water quality. From this program, the Lahontan Regional Water Board (Lahontan Water Board) received \$1 million of Proposition 84 bond funds to monitor water bodies potentially affected by grazing operations and to aid Lahontan landowners in implementing management practices to reduce the discharge of pollutants from grazing operations into surface waters. The Lahontan Water Board will evaluate applications submitted in response to the attached Request for Qualifications (RFQ) to select a qualified applicant to conduct this monitoring and management practice project.

II. APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

This section provides instructions for preparing and submitting an application for the attached RFQ. It consists of three subsections: How to Submit, What to Submit, and Requirements for Attachments. It is important that you follow these Application Instructions to ensure your application addresses all of the required elements. Once you submit your application to the State Water Board, you waive any privacy rights as well as other confidentiality protections afforded by law with respect to the application package.

Your application will be evaluated and scored based on the information provided in the RFQ and the expertise of the reviewers.

A. HOW TO SUBMIT

You must submit a complete application on-line using the State Water Board's Financial Assistance Application Submittal Tool (FAAST). The on-line FAAST application for the Proposition 84 Agricultural Water Quality Grants Program (AWQGP) will be available the week of December 8, 2008. You can access the application at the following secure link:
<https://faast.waterboards.ca.gov>

You will enter information into the following three (3) application sections: General Information, Application Questionnaire, and Application Attachments. You must submit the RFQ application only after you have entered all required information. Once you submit your RFQ application, you will receive an automated e-mail sent by FAAST confirming the date and time of submission for your application.

- If you have a question or problem with FAAST, please contact FAAST staff by phone at 1-866-434-1083, Monday through Friday, 8:00 A.M. – 5:00 P.M., or by e-mail at faast_admin@waterboards.ca.gov

- If you have a question as to the content or information requested in the RFQ Notice, please communicate with the Contact Persons listed at the end of this RFQ Notice.
- The RFQ application in FFAST consists of pull down menus or text boxes that will be used to submit answers to the questions, plus attachments.

FFAST USER HINTS:

- **Applicants should use a PC. Use of a Macintosh Computer impedes your ability to save your work to FFAST.**
- **Applicants should use Internet Explorer, version 6.0, or above. Use of any other internet browsers will impede your ability to save your work to FFAST.**
- **The character limit is indicated for each text box. Text box answers can range from 500, 1000, 1500, or 2000 characters (includes spaces and characters).**

B. WHAT TO SUBMIT

The RFQ application consists of a questionnaire and three attachments. The majority of the proposal content will be contained in the attachments. The remainder of the proposal content will be provided in response to questions directly entered into FFAST.

FFAST tracks attachments by an **attachment title, not file name**. When uploading an attachment in FFAST, the Attachment Title naming convention is as follows:

AttX_AttachmentName_#ofTotal#

Where "AttX" is the attachment letter; "AttachmentName" is the name for the attachment as specified below in the RFQ Notice; and "#ofTotal#" allows the reviewer to know how many files make up an attachment, where "#" is the number of a file and "Total#" is the total number of files submitted in the attachment. For example, if Attachment A – Statement of Support is made up of 2 files, the second file in the attachment submittal would be named:

AttA_StmtSup_2of2.

The file name section in FFAST requires a computer path to the file location on the applicant's computer. While there is no specific naming convention given here for the file name, you should consider using a similar name to the attachment title to simplify personal file management. **Do not use special characters such as dashes, asterisks, symbols, spaces, percentage signs, etc. Underscores are acceptable, as shown above.**

C. REQUIREMENTS FOR ATTACHMENTS

You are required to submit Attachments A,B and C to complete the RFQ for the Lahontan Water Board under Proposition 84 AWQGP. Please refer to the Minimum Submittal Requirements in the attached RFQ for discussion of what is required in Attachments A,B and C.

REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS

The California Regional Water Quality Control Board, Lahontan Region (Lahontan Water Board) is issuing a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) to public agencies and non-profit organizations qualified under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code in order to select a grantee to conduct the Project described below.

This Project will be funded from the Proposition 84 Agricultural Water Quality Grants Program (AWQGP). Further information on the AWQGP under Proposition 84 can be found at: http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/grants_loans/awqgp/index.shtml Attachment A to this RFQ includes *Frequently Asked Questions* on the grant process and the Proposition 84 AWQGP grant funds.

Project Title:

BACTERIAL SOURCE TRACKING (BST), GRAZING MANAGEMENT PRACTICE (MP) IMPLEMENTATION AND ASSESSMENT FOR WATERSHEDS IN THE LAHONTAN REGION

Schedule:

Deadline to submit qualifications using FFAST: January 30, 2009 by 5:00 PM

Tentative deadline to select grantee: February 27, 2009

Expected project start date: April 1, 2009

Expected project end date: March 31, 2013

Available funds: \$1,000,000

Grant Distribution:

- No more than 10% of total grant will be used by grantee for direct project costs associated with the administration and project management of the grant.
- At least 40% of total grant will be spent on implementing MPs that result in improvement of surface water quality.
- No more than 5% of total grant to be used for technical and consulting services to provide assistance to ranchers in designing and implementing MPs.

All costs associated with this Project are incurred by the Grantee prior to being invoiced to the Lahontan Water Board. No Advance Payment is allowed. Only work specified in the grant agreement will be reimbursed. Grant funds cannot be used for work performed prior to award and approval of the executed grant agreement.

GENERAL STATEMENT OF WORK

Over a four year period, the Grantee will conduct water quality monitoring and BST (Year 1), facilitate the implementation of MPs and evaluate the effectiveness of the MPs (Years 2, 3 and 4.)

The grantee will provide a variety of services including Project management (e.g., invoicing and reporting), administrative support and oversight, water quality monitoring, outreach to ranchers, technical assistance on MP selection, design, installation and site selection, oversight and evaluation of MPs.

BACKGROUND and PROJECT OBJECTIVE

The Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board (Lahontan Water Board) is the California State agency responsible for water quality protection east of the Sierra Nevada crest. It is one of nine Regional Water Boards in California which function as part of the California State Water Resources Control Board system within the California Environmental Protection Agency. The Lahontan Water Board implements both the federal Clean Water Act (CWA) and the Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act, part of the California Water Code. Water quality standards and control measures are contained in the *Water Quality Control Plan for the Lahontan Region* (Basin Plan).

Under Section 303(d) of the CWA, the Lahontan Water Board is required to identify surface waters which are not meeting water quality standards and are not expected to do so even with the use of technology-based controls. These impaired surface waters are identified on the CWA 303(d) list. For waters on the Section 303 (d) list, the Lahontan Water Board must adopt "Total Maximum Daily Loads" or TMDLs. TMDLs are water quality restoration plans required by the CWA to ensure the attainment of water quality standards in impaired surface water bodies. Once listed, in order to be removed from the 303(d) list (de-listed), data must show that reductions in the pollutant have occurred and it now meets the water quality standard in the Basin Plan

The objective of this Project is to target 303d-listed water bodies and other impaired water bodies for which sufficient monitoring data does not exist to 303d-list, wherein water quality impairments are readily solvable with grazing management practice (MP) implementation and could reasonably lead to de-listing of impaired water bodies or prevent further listing.

Ranching is the primary agricultural industry in the Lahontan Region. Related grazing agricultural operations may impair drinking water and other beneficial uses, as indicated by the number of 303(d)-listed impaired water bodies in the Region. Thirteen water body segments out of forty-three 303(d)-listed water bodies (or segments of water bodies) are for violations of pathogen water quality objectives. This is 30 percent of the Lahontan Region's listed waters. The total mileage of pathogen-listed streams (no lakes or wetlands are listed for pathogens) is 87 miles. Livestock grazing operations are the likely source of discharges of pathogens (fecal coliform) to surface waters in these streams, though in some cases, other sources such as rural septic systems or wildlife may be significant contributors.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

To improve water quality in bacteria-impaired water bodies, this Project includes three activities: 1) identify the sources of bacteriological water quality impairments, 2) implement MPs to improve water quality in one or more impaired watershed(s), and 3) monitor to assess the effectiveness of the implemented MPs.

The Grantee will perform the following services:

- **Conduct water quality monitoring for bacteria:** Baseline monitoring using fecal coliform and *E. coli* as indicators of water quality impairment. Follow-up with Bacterial Source Tracking (BST) assessment to identify the source(s) of contamination. The most cost-effective BST method will be used, sufficient to identify bacteria sources in a given waterbody. Criteria used to determine water bodies within the Lahontan Region to be sampled include: 303d-listed waters in the Walker River, the Owens River-Mono Lake, and the Susan River-Eagle Lake watersheds, water bodies not yet listed as impaired, but where local activities, such as grazing, may contribute to potential water quality impairments from bacteria, water bodies where there may be multiple bacteria sources (e.g. grazing, septic, high recreation impact), and water bodies where public complaints have been registered concerning potential bacteriological pollution.
- **Facilitate implementation of MPs** in watershed(s) wherein bacteria monitoring and BST assessment show grazing or other activities impacting water quality standards. Water bodies with the largest bacteria impairments will be initially targeted as candidates for implementation of MPs to improve water quality. Specific location of the MPs will be determined in cooperation with willing ranchers (landowners and operators.) Attachment B to the RFQ lists potential MPs.
- **Assess effectiveness of the implemented MPs** in improving water quality. Conduct additional monitoring to evaluate effectiveness of MPs.

Specific Grantee tasks include:

- Provide management, administrative support and oversight, including management and oversight of any subcontracts with other agencies and parties as required to complete work included in this Project description. This task includes preparation and submittal of progress and other reports (e.g., draft Project report, final Project report), invoicing, and maintaining auditable files. Invoicing by landowner MP recipients, technical advisors/consultants and other subcontractors will be through the Grantee. Audits of invoices and billing will be made by Regional Water Board staff. Reporting requirements include GPS information for each monitoring site and MP implementation site. Other requirements include completion of these three items as specified by the State Water Board: Project Assessment and Evaluation Plan, Natural Resource Projects Inventory (NPRI) Project Survey Form and final project summary. For more information on these requirements, go to www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/grants_loans/grant_info/index.shtml. All state requirements for grant funding must be met and adhered to during the extent of the grant.
- Coordination with Lahontan Water Board staff on selection of monitoring sites, monitoring protocol, water quality laboratory selection and laboratory analyses. Complete Monitoring Plan, Monitoring Reports, and Quality Assurance Project Plan for Lahontan Water Board staff acceptance. For more information on these plans and reports, go to www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/grants_loans/grant_info/index.shtml.
- Conduct outreach activities to inform ranchers of availability of technical assistance and funding for MP implementation including appropriate management practices to be implemented for the selected sites.
- Work with Lahontan Water Board staff to select sites for MP implementation and to determine appropriate MPs for the site. This includes establishing an evaluation

process and criteria for site selection and MP selection. Distribution of sites over numerous waterbodies will be a priority in the selection process. Potential MPs are included in Attachment B to the RFQ. Each site selected for MP implementation will require documentation on the work to be performed, cost estimates, required permits, and compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). For each MP site selected, the scope of work, schedule, reporting requirements, and cost estimates will be negotiated between the grantee, the Regional Water Board staff, and the recipient landowner. The Regional Water Board staff will have final approval of conditions for each selected MP site.

- Prepare an agreement between the landowner at selected MP implementation sites and the grantee for access to area where MPs will be implemented with the terms/conditions for receipt of grant money. The agreement must allow access by Lahontan Water Board staff to inspect the progress of the implemented MPs. The agreement must include reporting by recipient landowners to the grantee on a set schedule. The agreement must include GPS information for the site, written assurance that the recipient landowner will maintain and service installed or constructed management practices to ensure proper operation. The agreement will also state that the recipient landowner assumes the cost for operation, maintenance and service of the MPs.
- Provide technical assistance on selection of MPs.
- Provide oversight of MP installation.
- Coordinate with landowners of MP implementation sites to provide documentation of matching funds.
- Track the progress of funded MP implementation.
- Assess and evaluate the effectiveness of MPs implemented to improve surface water quality.
- Subcontract with other agencies and parties as required to complete work included in this project description.
- Designate a Project Director as the main point of contact.

FUNDING MATCH REQUIREMENTS –

Landowners selected for MP implementation are required to provide a funding match of 25%. “Funding match” means funds made available by the applicant from non-State sources.¹ The funding match may include, but is not limited to, federal funds, local funding, or donated and volunteer services from non-state sources. For all programs the funding match is calculated based on total project cost for which funding is requested. The Regional and State Water Boards reserve the discretion to review and approve funding match expenditures. For matching funds, additional documentation to support the amount claimed as match for each invoice must be submitted.

MINIMUM SUBMITTAL REQUIREMENTS

Public agencies and non-profit organizations interested in providing services for this grant opportunity shall complete an application questionnaire through the Financial Application Assistance Submittal Tool (FAAST) located online at <https://faast.waterboards.ca.gov>.

Submittals will be scored only upon receipt of the following minimum criteria, which are mandatory and posted at the FAAST website for Proposition 84 AWQGP Applicants:

¹ A state agency, though, may use state funds and services for the funding match.

- Submitting agency or organization
- Legal Name on file with the Secretary of State and Federal Tax Identification Number of the agency or organization.
- An estimate of personnel time and costs (labor rates on hourly basis), materials and supplies, and operating expenses for grantee to perform the project management, administrative support, and oversight requirements of this grant.

Additional information required for a complete application must be submitted as Word documents as attachments to the application in FFAST.

- **Attachment A -- Statements of Support**
 - Two written statements of support from a cooperating entity, such a watershed group or an agricultural organization, with contact name, address and phone number. Written statements will be limited to one page for each cooperating entity, minimum 11 point font.
- **Attachment B -- Statement of Qualifications (SOQ)** limited to four pages, minimum 11 point font.
 - The applicant's professional experience in performing services of a similar nature with a description of professional experience and background of the agency/organization in relation to project management, cooperative work, bacterial water quality monitoring (including BST) and outreach with ranchers and others in the agricultural community.
 - A list of proposed personnel to be assigned to and involved with the Project. The list should identify each person's professional experience and qualifications, as well as the description of professional experience and background of any sub-consultants that will provide technical support. The percentage of time each person will spend on the project must be estimated and stated.
 - A description of any other background, training, skill, or experience relevant to the firm/organization and/or personnel assigned to the project.
 - Examples of completed or on-going work that illustrate project management skills, outreach efforts, and ties to the agricultural community.
- **Attachment C – Task-based Budget** limited to two (2) pages, minimum 11 point font.
 - A general task-based budget for the project including an estimate of personnel time and costs (labor rates on hourly basis), materials and supplies, and operating expenses.

DESIRABLE QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERTISE

- Program Knowledge -- The SOQ should clearly state the applicant's expertise and experience with the AWQGP and the Lahontan Water Board's nonpoint source program, including grazing management practices.
- Water Quality Monitoring – The SOQ should describe the applicant's water quality monitoring expertise and experience with an emphasis on bacteria analyses and use of BST.
- Public Outreach and Facilitation -- The SOQ should describe the applicant's expertise and demonstrate an understanding of conducting public outreach and the skills necessary for facilitation. The applicant should have experience in establishing public involvement, in conducting or assisting in conducting various public meetings, and the preparation of supporting materials (newsletters, public notices, website, etc.).

- Knowledge of the Lahontan Region -- The applicant shall demonstrate knowledge of and expertise in the Lahontan Region, its environment, water quality issues, and the relevant concerns of the agricultural community and regulatory agencies.
- Availability, Schedule, and Project Management -- The availability of the applicant and its team will be an important selection factor. The SOQ must clearly identify the person that will be responsible for directing the team (Project Director). Describe the Project Director's relevant experience in such a role, the expertise that the person brings to the role, and the percentage of time that will be devoted to the grant.
- Laboratory Capabilities – Summarize the capabilities of the applicant to perform bacteriological analyses including fecal coliform, *E. coli*, and BST methods. Include copies of laboratory Standard Operating Procedure (SOP), laboratory Quality Assurance/Quality Control (QA/QC) manuals and price schedule. For analyses the applicant cannot perform In-House, summarize information on external laboratories which can perform the required analyses, and include copies of their SOP and QA/QC manuals.
- Scaling Cost of Analyses for BST watershed studies – the lowest cost BST method capable of characterizing expected sources of bacteria in a watershed shall be used. For example, if contamination from septic systems is the primary suspected source, a simple, relatively inexpensive method such as *Bacteroides* should be used. However, in more mixed-source watersheds where human, livestock, and wildlife sources are likely, a more expensive method such as *E. coli* ribotyping (ribosomal DNA analysis) would be required to assess the relative distribution of bacterial sources. Therefore, the applicant must consider costs and benefits of the following BST methods, and include in the proposal at least one molecular method, and at least three non-molecular methods:

Molecular methods (DNA fingerprinting)

- Ribotyping (RT)
- Polymerase chain reaction (PCR)
- Pulsed-field gel electrophoresis (PFGE)

Non-molecular methods

Microbial methods

- Bacteroides and/or other species-specific source indicators

Biochemical methods

- Antibiotic resistance analysis (ARA)
- Cell wall fatty acid methyl ester (FAME)
- F-specific coliphage typing
- Carbon utilization (BIOLOG)

Chemical methods

- Caffeine detection
- Optical brightener detection

- Any additional relevant information.

SELECTION AND ADMINISTRATIVE PROCESS

Selection of the Grantee will be based on the following criteria:

1. The applicant's professional past experience in project management, cooperative work, water quality monitoring and outreach.
2. Quality and relevance of completed or ongoing work
3. Reliability
 - Demonstrated reliability and continuity of firm/organization's proposed staff and sub-consultants.

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- Description of workload and demonstrated ability to meet grant requirements and schedules.

The Grantee will be selected on the basis of written responses to this RFQ and the FFAST application, and an oral presentation. Submittals will be evaluated and scored based upon the stated selection criteria for those agencies/organizations who have complied with the minimum qualifications requirements. The information provided in the section labeled "Desirable Qualifications and Expertise" will also be used to evaluate and score each SOQ.

Three agencies/organizations with the highest scores will be selected for the "short list." These applicants will be invited for an interview and asked to make an oral presentation that should include a proposed scope of work and their organization's qualifications and experience.

Upon completion of all interviews, the agencies/organizations will be ranked in order of preference. The number one applicant will be asked to submit a detailed line item budget and scope of work for the work noted in this RFQ. If acceptable, further documentation including the Project Director Certification Form, the CEQA Environmental Information Form, and the required elements of the grant agreement will be negotiated with the Lahontan Water Board and State Water Board staff before the Project can start.

For more information, please contact:

Bruce Warden at (530) 542-5416 or bwarden@waterboards.ca.gov.
Carly Nilson at (530) 542-5445 or cnilson@waterboards.ca.gov.
Cindy Wise at (530) 542-5408 or cwise@waterboards.ca.gov

Attachment A
PROJECTS TO IMPLEMENT MANAGEMENT PRACTICES
TO IMPROVE SURFACE WATER QUALITY FROM AGRICULTURAL LANDS
Grant Process -- Frequently Asked Questions

Question: ***What funding will be available in the Lahontan Region to implement management practices?***

Answer: A total of \$13.72 million is available under the Proposition 84, Agricultural Water Quality Grant Program. One million dollars is allocated to the Lahontan Region for a Project titled *Bacterial Source Tracking and Grazing Management Practice Implementation and Assessment for Watersheds in the Lahontan Region*. At least \$400,000 will be used to implement actual management practices, with the remainder to be budgeted for water quality monitoring, technical and consulting services, and for direct costs associated with administration and project management of the grant.

Question: ***Who will be the Grantee?***

Answer: The Grantee will be a public agency or a non-profit organization. The Grantee will provide project management, administrative support, and oversight for the Project.

Question: ***How will the Grantee and Recipients be chosen?***

Answer: The Lahontan Water Board staff will select the Grantee using a competitive process. A Request for Qualifications (RFQ) will be distributed to interested parties. Applicants will submit required information and their qualifications using FFAST. Specific selection criteria and the selection process are included in the RFQ and will be used to select the Grantee. The selected Grantee, Regional Water Board staff and State Water Board staff will develop the grant agreement for the Project.

Question: ***How long is the term of the Prop 84 AWQGP grant?***

Answer: \$6 million of the total \$13.72 million is in the FY 2007/2008 state budget and is currently available. It must be encumbered by June 2009 and spent by June 2012. The remainder of the grant money will be in the FY 2008/2009 budget, must be encumbered by June 2010 and spent by June 2013.

For more information, please contact:

Bruce Warden at (530) 542-5416 or bwarden@waterboards.ca.gov.

Carly Nilson at (530) 542-5445 or cnilson@waterboards.ca.gov.

Cindy Wise at (530) 542-5408 or cwise@waterboards.ca.gov

Attachment B POTENTIAL GRAZING MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

From the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Field Office Technical Guide

- Spring Development (Code 574)
- Prescribed Grazing (Code 528)
- Fencing (Code 382)
- Filter Strip (Code 393)
- Heavy use area protection (Code 561)
- Riparian Forest Buffer (Code 391)
- Access Roads (Code 560)
- Critical Area Planting (code 342)
- Diversion (Code 362)
- Grassed water way (Code 412)
- Sediment Basin (Code 350)
- Wetland Creation (Code 658)
- Wetland Enhancement (Code 659)
- Contour Buffer Strips (Code 332)
- Grazing Land Mechanical Treatment (Code 548)
- Range Planting (Code 550)

Other MPs:

- Minimize amount of bare soil (...mulch or revegetate, plant cover crops, etc)
- Direct concentrated runoff from bare soil into natural buffers of vegetation, or gentler sloping areas, or constructed filtration areas or ponds
- Prevent rills by breaking large or bare areas into smaller patches that allow drainage before rills develop
- Disconnect and disperse flow paths
- Dewater active gullies, when occurring on pasture land or rangeland but not within a water course, to prevent their enlargement and reduce capacity for sediment transfer (channel armoring and grading is also an option – but more expensive and may require permits)
- Seed areas with quick-growing vegetation
- Exclusion fencing around legacy sediment delivery sites, such as areas with accelerated bank erosion and/or accelerated streambank down-cutting, forming excessively incised channels.
- Fencing
- Prescribed grazing
- Buffer vegetation
- Eroded sediment/pathogen/nutrient is detained or filtered before leaving pasture
- Potential problem areas are regraded and protected or confined onsite.
- Critical area planting
- Stabilization structure
- Bare soil areas are covered to reduce runoff potential
- Contour buffer strip
- Channel Stabilization (e.g. NRCS conservation practice)
- Conservation Cover
- Contour Buffer strips
- Cover Crop