

# **SOLICITATION NOTICE**

## **REQUEST FOR CONCEPT PROPOSALS**

### **FOR CLEAN WATER ACT SECTION 319(h) NONPOINT SOURCE & TIMBER REGULATION AND FOREST RESTORATION GRANTS**

**COMPLETE APPLICATIONS ARE DUE BY 5:00 P.M. ON THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 24, 2015**

The State Water Resources Control Board's (State Water Board) Division of Financial Assistance is accepting applications for the Nonpoint Source (NPS) Grant Program. The NPS Grant Program is used to support projects that implement full scale, on-the-ground management measures or practices in alignment with watershed-based plans to address water quality problems in surface water and groundwater resulting from NPS pollution. Funds for the NPS Grant Program are appropriated by Congress under Clean Water Act section 319(h) (CWA 319[h]). These funds are made available via a grant agreement between the State Water Board and the United States Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA).

In addition and new for the 2016 NPS Grant Program, California Budget Act appropriated the Timber Regulation and Forest Restoration Fund (Timber Fund) to fund existing restoration grant programs. The Timber Fund will fund projects that implement forest management measures on forest lands<sup>1</sup> to improve water quality.

#### **Eligible Applicants**

Eligible applicants include public agencies, nonprofit 501(c)(3) organizations, Federally Recognized Tribes, state agencies, public colleges, and federal agencies. For additional information, refer to [Attachment 1 – 2016 NPS Grant Program Guidelines](#) (Program Guidelines). Eligible applicants are encouraged to collaborate with local entities involved in watershed management.

Applicants are required to have the appropriate water conservation and efficiency programs in place as a condition of the grant award. A web link with examples of water conservation and efficiency programs is available [here](#).

**In order to be eligible, applicants must work directly with their appropriate Regional Water Quality Control Board (Regional Water Board) grant coordinator ([Attachment 2](#)) and appropriate staff (if directed to do so by the Grant Coordinator) throughout all phases of the grant application process, including development of the project proposal.**

#### **Project Eligibility and Funding Availability**

Eligibility is based on whether the project fits within the NPS Program Preferences ([Program Guidelines](#)) and meets criteria for applicant eligibility, program funding limits, project timing, and match requirements (Table 1). Applicants and the proposed project must meet all the eligibility requirements in order to move forward in the competitive grant selection process. Ineligible projects are identified in the Program Guidelines.

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<sup>1</sup> California Public Resource Code section 12220(g): "Forest land" is land that can support 10-percent native tree cover of any species, including hardwoods, under natural conditions, and that allows for management of one or more forest resources, including timber, aesthetics, fish and wildlife, biodiversity, water quality, recreation, and other public benefits.

**Table 1: 2016 NPS Grant Project Type Information and Funding Requirements**

Project Types	Project Funding Range	Match Requirement <sup>2</sup> (% of the total project cost)
<b>CWA 319(h) Projects</b> – implement actions to restore impaired surface waters and groundwater by controlling NPS pollution. Projects include on-the-ground NPS pollutant reduction projects that achieve quantifiable water quality benefits in a <a href="#">NPS Program Preferences</a> and that are identified in comprehensive watershed plans. Maximum grant project period is three years.	Minimum: \$250,000 Maximum:\$800,000	25% (75% septic system upgrades)
<b>Timber Fund Projects</b> – implement <a href="#">forest management measures</a> on forest lands in watersheds with <a href="#">State Responsibility Area</a> <sup>1</sup> . Project must demonstrate water quality improvement. Maximum grant project period is three years.	Minimum: \$250,000 Maximum: \$1,000,000	25%
Notes: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. As delineated by the Department of Forestry and Fire Protection – Fire and Resource Assessment Program, Accessed: <a href="http://frap.cdf.ca.gov/projects/sra_mapping/sra_2015.php">http://frap.cdf.ca.gov/projects/sra_mapping/sra_2015.php</a></li> <li>2. The match requirement may be waived or reduced for projects that directly benefit a disadvantaged community (see <a href="#">Attachment 1</a> and <a href="#">Appendix 4</a>)</li> </ol>		

**Solicitation Process**

The [Program Guidelines](#) for soliciting applications, evaluating proposals, and awarding grants were established by the State Water Board, Regional Water Boards, and U.S. EPA. This is a single solicitation for CWA 319(h) and Timber Fund proposals but the process and schedule for each may differ. The NPS Grant Program solicitation will be a two-step process. In the first step, applicants will submit concept proposals using the State Water Board’s on-line [Financial Assistance Application Submittal Tool](#) (FAAST). Applicants with the highest-ranking concept proposals based on evaluations by staff from the State Water Board, Regional Water Boards, and U.S. EPA (Review Panel) will be invited back to submit a full proposal. Based on the quality of the concept proposal, Timber Fund proposals may be invited directly into the Grant Agreement development process. After a thorough review of all full proposals by the Review Panel, a recommended funding list will be developed for each funding source and presented to the State Water Board Executive Director for final approval.

All applicants requesting funds from the NPS Grant Program must submit a complete electronic concept proposal by **5:00 pm on Thursday, September 24, 2015** using the State Water Board’s online application submittal program FAAST at <https://faast.waterboards.ca.gov>. **Late applications will not be accepted.**

To be considered complete, the submitted concept proposal application must include all of the items in the checklist below (Table 2). Applicants should use this checklist to verify all required information is submitted using FAAST. Eligibility and program requirements for the NPS Grant Program included in this solicitation notice are based on the [Program Guidelines](#), which is available on-line at the [NPS Grant Program website](#).

**Table 2: Checklist for Completing the Online Concept Proposal Application**

Within FAAST, the following sections must be completed and submitted:	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>General Information</b> For the project location information requested in this section, specify the latitude and longitude values that are representative of the project. For large areas of land, specify the mid-point of the area. For a waterbody, specify the mid-point of the waterbody area/reach.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Funding Programs</b> Check the box next to either the “Clean Water Act 319(h)” or “Timber Fund”. Consult with the Grant Coordinator listed in <a href="#">Attachment 2</a> of this notice prior to developing a proposal for all questions regarding applicant eligibility, project eligibility, and Program Preferences.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Project Management</b> Please indicate the project director and the project manager from the applicant’s organization.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Legislative Information</b> Enter the State assembly, State senate, and U.S. congressional districts where the project is located. For projects that include more than one district, please enter each district. Look at the tables provided in FAAST to assist with determining the appropriate districts.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Agency Contacts</b> This section must include all agency contacts (e.g., State Water Board, Regional Water Board, and the U.S. EPA) that assisted in the development of the project proposal. You may enter more than one agency contact.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Cooperating Entities</b> List the organizations that will assist the applicant in implementing the project, including partner organizations, consultants, and volunteers. You may enter more than one cooperating entity. We may contact cooperating agencies as part of the application review process.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Application Questionnaire</b> The concept proposal questions are shown in FAAST.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Required Attachments</b>  Fifteen-page proposal package includes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Narrative – no more than eleven pages (label Attachment A)</li> <li>• Maps – no more than three pages (label Attachment B)</li> <li>• Line Item budget table – one-page templet provided (label Attachment C)</li> </ul> Instructions are presented in <a href="#">Attachment 3</a> to this solicitation, which is available on-line at the <a href="#">NPS Grant Program website</a> .

For further assistance on the NPS Grant Program, please contact Mr. Matthew Freese of the Division of Water Quality at (916) 341-5485 or [Matthew.Freese@waterboards.ca.gov](mailto:Matthew.Freese@waterboards.ca.gov)

For questions about FAAST, please contact Ms. Patricia Leary of the Division of Financial Assistance, at (916) 341-5167 or [pat.leary@waterboards.ca.gov](mailto:pat.leary@waterboards.ca.gov).

You may also contact FAAST staff by phone at 1-866-434-1083 or by email at [faast\\_admin@waterboards.ca.gov](mailto:faast_admin@waterboards.ca.gov).

**Table 3: 2016 NPS Grant Schedule**

DATES SHOWN IN ITALICS ARE TENTATIVE DATES

<b>MILESTONE OR ACTIVITY</b>	<b>SCHEDULE</b>
Solicitation notice released	August 10, 2015
<b>Complete concept proposal applications must be submitted to the State Water Board by 5:00 p.m. <u>Applications submitted after 5:00 p.m. on the due date will not be reviewed or considered for funding.</u></b>	<b>September 24, 2015</b>
Invite selected applicants to submit full proposal applications. <sup>1</sup>	<i>November 9, 2015</i>
<b>Complete full proposal applications must be submitted to the State Water Board by 5:00 p.m. <u>Applications submitted after 5:00 p.m. on the due date will not be reviewed or considered for funding.</u></b>	<b><i>January 21, 2016</i></b>
State Water Board Executive Director approval of final grant awards.	May 2016

Notes:

1. Selected concept proposals for Timber Fund only projects will be invited directly into the grant agreement development process. In this case, State Water Board Executive Director approval may occur prior to May 2016.