Logo

Description automatically generated

# 2023 Southern California Wetlands Recovery Project (WRP) Community Wetland Restoration Grant Program

# PROGRAM INFORMATION AND APPLICATION GUIDELINES

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| BACKGROUND |  |  |

The Southern California Wetlands Recovery Project (WRP) Community Wetland Restoration Grant Program (CWRGP) has provided funding to over 170 community-based restoration projects in coastal wetlands and along coastal stream corridors in the southern California region over the past 20 years. This program supports achieving Goals 1-3 of the WRP [Regional Strategy 2018](https://scwrp.databasin.org/pages/regional-strategy-report), by restoring coastal wetlands, streams, adjacent habitats, and other non-tidal wetlands. The program has a specific emphasis on Objective 1 of Goal 3: **Support Community-Based Restoration Projects**. A partial compilation of projects funded in past CWRGP cycles can be found on the WRP website [*Project Board*](https://scwrp.org/projects/?funding_level=cwrgp&program_type=restoration&project_status=completed&list=0).

The goals of the program are to build local capacity to plan and implement wetland restoration projects; promote community involvement in wetland restoration activities; and foster education about wetland ecosystems. The CWRGP seeks to engage and benefit people and communities that include but are not limited to lower-income individuals and households, people with disabilities, Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC), immigrant communities, and other historically marginalized communities (“CWRGP Priority Communities”).

The CWRGP will be administered and partially funded by the [State Coastal Conservancy (SCC)](https://scc.ca.gov/) and partially funded by the [Wildlife Conservation Board](https://wcb.ca.gov/) (WCB), and the [San Gabriel and Lower Los Angeles Rivers and Mountains Conservancy (RMC)](http://rmc.ca.gov/).

The CWRGP is particularly interested in funding projects falling within 1.5 miles of the main stem or tributary of the Lower Los Angeles River corridor. Please refer to the red outlined area on this [map](https://www.arcgis.com/apps/instant/minimalist/index.html?appid=22229eddcae04cf8a4d05c541a04e055) to see if your project falls within that area. Note that while this has been identified as a priority area, we are accepting proposals for projects within coastal wetlands and coastal stream corridors throughout the southern California region.

**CWRGP Priorities:** To achieve the objective to support community-based restoration projects, the CWRGP will prioritize funding for projects that:

1. Engage CWRGP Priority Communities to restore or enhance coastal wetlands and coastal stream corridors.
2. Implement restoration projects that have strong community benefits such as community engagement, education, workforce development, career and leadership development.
3. Demonstrate community-led planning and implementation of desired projects that are anchored in community expertise, for example projects that utilize community leaders, community-based organizations, tribal members, local planners, or local and state government officials.
4. Increase organizational capacity to plan and implement habitat restoration projects.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **PROJECT DURATION AND AWARD** |  |  |

We anticipate that approximately $350,000 will be awarded in this grant round and 4-6 projects will be selected (more projects may be selected dependent on application requests). **Applicants may request a grant amount up to $100,000.** **The average grant amount awarded will range between $30,000 - $100,000.** The project duration will be a maximum of three years, and projects should be completed by December of 2026.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS |  |  |

Eligible applicants include 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations, local government agencies (City or County), other public agencies, federally recognized tribes, and nonprofit or public universities. Proposals demonstrating partnerships between more than one community-based organization and/ or local public agencies are prioritized.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| ELIGIBLE HABITAT TYPES AND PROJECTS |  |  |

**Eligible Habitat Types**: Wetlands and associated habitat can include coastal wetlands (e.g., tidal marshes), streams, rivers, wetland-adjacent riparian habitat, depressional wetlands (e.g., vernal pools), and transitional upland habitat adjacent to wetlands (e.g., dunes, riverbanks and coastal sage scrub). We encourage projects falling within 1.5 miles of the main stem or tributary of the Lower Los Angeles River corridor to apply.

To be eligible for funding, projects must restore wetland or wetland associated habitat and involve the community in the restoration implementation. Projects that are ready to implement will be prioritized; more specifically:

**Restoration or preservation of a coastal wetland, coastal stream corridor, or other non-tidal wetlands:** Projects must have as a primary goal the restoration of a coastal wetland (estuarine or vernal pool) or a coastal stream corridor in southern California from Point Conception to the U.S.-Mexico border.

**Community involvement and educational component:** Project implementation must engage community members and have an educational component. Through the CWRGP, the SCC is attempting to make significant impacts to both the region’s wetland resources *and* the region’s communities, with projects that engage and educate the community through their hands-on participation in restoration, resulting in measurable restoration outcomes. This education linked to a restoration experience provides numerous positive feedbacks to the community, such as creating a sense of place, fostering stewardship of wetland habitats, and improving environmental awareness. The CWRGP is particularly interested in engaging a diverse array of community members in the participating projects (see “CWRGP Priority Communities” in Background section above).

**Other eligible activities:** Additional activities can be supported by this program so long as they are directly related to a specific, identifiable restoration project. These additional eligible activities include project development, planning, and capacity building. Capacity building includes organizational capacity (i.e., internal training and staffing support) and workforce development (i.e., career and leadership development) directly related to the restoration project.

**Sample project types and activities** (this list is not fully inclusive of all eligible project types/activities):

1. Removal of invasive plant species, trash, debris, and other pollutants
2. Installation and maintenance of native trees, plants, and shrubs
3. Intertidal habitat restoration
4. Development and installment of trails and interpretive elements that support habitat restoration efforts
5. Training and development of leadership skills as part of restoration activities (e.g., interns training student participants in coastal ecology)
6. Educational workshops or outreach that educate volunteers about wetland ecosystems, watershed issues and ecological benefits of habitat restoration, as part of restoration activities

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| APPLICATION SELECTION AND GRANT AWARD PROCESS |  |  |

**Project Selection:** A selection committee that includes staff from WCB, RMC, and the SCC will review the CWRGP applications and evaluate each application based on how well it meets the Selection Criteria below. Other agencies that participate in the WRP and that could potentially consider funding CWRGP projects will be invited to participate in the selection committee as well. See “Grant Process” below for additional details.

**Selection Criteria:** Applications will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

1. Extent to which the project will restore coastal wetlands, streams, adjacent habitats, and other non-tidal wetlands.
2. Extent to which the project will advance hands-on community involvement in a wetland restoration project, particularly involvement beyond the traditionally engaged environmental groups.
3. Degree to which the project will help build the applicant’s capacity to plan and implement wetlands restoration projects.
4. Extent to which the project will foster education about wetland ecosystems and the impacts and threats to those ecosystems.
5. Extent to which the project demonstrates broader community interest, involvement and support.
6. Applicant experience and capacity to implement the project and provide required long-term protection agreements.

**Grant Process:**

1. Applications are due by 5pm PT on **May 12, 2023**.
2. A committee will review applications at a meeting in May-June 2023 and select the projects that will be recommended to the SCC for a grant at a public SCC board meeting.
3. Applicants may be asked to provide clarification on their proposed project or additional information about their project regarding CEQA review, consultation with local tribes and consistency with local coastal planning.
4. Provisional notification of the grant award or denial will be made by July with formal/final notification occurring after the SCC Board meeting in September or November 2023.
5. Notification of grant approval will occur directly following the SCC Board meeting. Should other funding agencies engage in application review and identify select projects for recommendation under other funding sources, those determinations will be communicated to affected applicants.
6. The SCC will enter into grant agreements with successful applicants during Winter of 2023/2024.
7. Funding for all projects receiving SCC funding will be available by early 2024.

Table 1: Grant Cycle Timeline

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Schedule | Milestone / Activity |
| February 2023 | Request for Proposals Released |
| March 9, 2023 | Informational Webinar |
| May 12, 2023 | Applications are due by 5pm PT |
| July 2023 | Provisional notification of award or denial |
| September or November 2023 | SCC Board review |
| Winter 2023/2024 | Development of grant agreements and projects can begin |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| OTHER CONSIDERATIONS FOR APPLYING: |  |  |

1. The CWRGP is designed for relatively small-scale projects or a small portion of a larger project that can achieve on-the-ground restoration while engaging CWRGP Priority Communities. A project should have clearly defined goals and outcomes that can be achieved between one and three years (depending on the project needs). **If you are unsure if your project meets required selection criteria, please send a short project description (approximately 1 paragraph) to** [**Maravilla.Clemens@scc.ca.gov**](mailto:Maravilla.Clemens@scc.ca.gov) **before completing and submitting a full application.**
2. The SCC will award no more than one CWRGP grant per applicant. Therefore, if you have multiple project concepts, select the highest priority for the proposal.
3. CWRGP grants will not be awarded solely for experiments or research.
4. Funding of an ongoing monitoring project will not be granted. Startup costs (capital costs) for a monitoring project or monitoring and maintenance tied to a specific restoration project may be considered if required to ensure project success. These types of activities must be included in the budget and completed within the project cycle.
5. Projects proposed for transitional upland habitat must demonstrate a clear connection and benefit to the adjacent wetland habitat.
6. If the applicant is not the landowner of the project site, the applicant will need to provide evidence of landowner approval prior to project implementation.
7. Grant recipients may be required to enter into **15–20 year grant agreements** to ensure long-term protection of the property (i.e., restored property is operated, used and maintained for the project purpose for 15-20 years).

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| APPLICATION GUIDELINES |  |  |

An electronic copy of the application template is available on the WRP website at [scwrp.org](https://scwrp.org/). Please follow the application template when preparing your proposal. Each application should include (in no less than 10 pt. font, 1-inch margins):

**Application Cover Page**

1. Contact Information
2. Project Information
3. Location Information
4. Elected Officials

**Project Narrative** (**6 page** **maximum)** that includes the following sections:

1. **Need for Project (1-2 paragraphs):** Describe the specific problems, issues or unserved needs the project will address.
2. **CWRGP Priorities:** Which CWRGP Priorities does the project meet (check all that apply)? Briefly describe how the project meets each checked program priority in 1-2 sentences per priority.
3. **Project Description (1-2 pages):** Describe all of the major components of the project and the related questions listed**.**
4. **CWRGP Priority Community Engagement (3 paragraphs):** Describe all of the community engagement elements of the project and address the listed questions in the response.
5. **Site Description (1 paragraph):** Describe the project site or area, including site characteristics that are tied to the project objectives (e.g., current vegetation assemblages, condition of habitats, known wildlife migration corridors, etc.). When relevant, include ownership and management information.
6. **Project Readiness (1-2 paragraphs):** Provide a brief description of project readiness, including land access and tenure agreements, and property restriction or encumbrances, if applicable. Also include possible factors which could significantly delay the implementation and/or completion of the project and how these factors will be addressed (e.g., permitting delays, habitat seasonal restrictions, etc.).
7. **California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Status:** Projects funded by the SCC must be reviewed in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (“CEQA”). CEQA does not apply to projects that will not have either a direct or indirect effect on the environment. For all other projects, if the project is statutorily or categorically exempt under CEQA, no further review is necessary. If the proposed project is not exempt, it must be evaluated by a public agency that is issuing a permit, providing funding, or approving the project, to determine whether the activities may have a significant effect on the environment. The evaluation results in a “Negative Declaration (Neg Dec),” “Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND),” or “Environmental Impact Report.” **NOTE – the SCC cannot grant funding for construction or restoration projects without final CEQA documentation.** Select the appropriate answer and briefly specify why or how the projects meets the terms.
8. **Permits:** List permits the project will require, the respective status (acquired, pending, etc.) and the date the permit was acquired or the expected date it will be acquired. Add more rows as necessary.
9. **Specific Tasks:** Identify the specific tasks that will be undertaken and the work and deliverables that will be accomplished for each task. The tasks listed in the table serve only as examples. Add or delete rows as necessary.
10. **Measuring Success (1-2 paragraphs):** Describe the plan for monitoring, evaluating, and reporting project effectiveness, and implementing adaptive management strategies if necessary. For projects with planning activities, do the plans include monitoring and measuring project success? Who will be responsible for funding and implementing ongoing management and monitoring? Explain how the project site will be protected for up to 15-20 years, per funding requirements (see #7 under the “Other Considerations for Applying” section).
11. **Partnerships and Collaborations (1-2 paragraphs):** List the public agencies, non-profit organizations, elected officials, tribal governments, or private entities that the applicant is partnering and/or collaborating with on the project. Describe involvement in the development of the project by communities impacted or benefited by the project.
12. **Tribal Engagement. (1-2 paragraphs):** Describe efforts to engage CA Native American tribes with the project. Examples of tribal engagement include good faith, documented efforts to work with tribes traditionally and culturally affiliated to the project area. Note that for projects selected for funding, SCC will initiate government-to-government consultation requests with tribal governments prior to recommending the project for funding. Outcomes of the tribal consultations could affect the scope or budget of the project. Projects that communicate, consult, or engage with tribes throughout the development and implementation of the project are encouraged.
13. **Applicant Experience and Capacity (1-2 paragraphs):** Briefly address the listed questions in the response. If applicant qualifies as a 501(c)(3) organization, provide your Letter of Determination from the Internal Revenue Service indicating current IRS 501(c)(3) status and a completed [Nonprofit Organization Pre-Award Questionnaire](https://scc.ca.gov/files/2019/07/SCC_Grant_Appl-NPO_PreAwardQuestionnaire.pdf). *Note: Applicants who have submitted the Nonprofit Questionnaire in the past two years do not need to resubmit.*

**Project Budget**

**Please note the following:**

1. Budget numbers should be rounded to the nearest $100.
2. The grant cannot be used to pay for food or drink, even for volunteers.
3. The budget can support a range of activities (see sample project budget in application). Modify Tasks to fit the project as appropriate and add/ remove rows as necessary.
4. Organizational Capacity, Workforce Development, and Project Planning and Development activities **must not total more than 50% of the total funding amount requested from the WRP**.
5. No more than 20% of an SCC grant can be used for indirect costs.

**Budget Notes:**

* 1. **Labor Costs:** For labor costs associated with project tasks, include positions, hourly rate(s), and number of projected hours. Include sufficient detail in the budget notes to facilitate understanding of how you determined the labor cost for a specific task.
  2. **Other Funds:** Provide information about the specific source of any “Other Funds” including matching funds, and whether that funding has been secured or is dependent on a future award or authorization. Add or delete rows as necessary.
  3. **In-kind Services:** In-kind services or contributions include volunteer time and materials. Describe and estimate the value of expected in-kind services.
  4. **Need for Advanced Funding:** The CWRGP is a reimbursable grant program, meaning funds are typically paid in arrears; however, a small amount of funding will be made available for projects that need to be paid in advance. If your organization needs to be paid in advance, please specify the need for advance funding, as a pre-approval process will be required.

**Attachments** Do not include unsolicited attachments such as resumes, letters of support, etc. These will be specifically requested if they are needed.

1. A regional map (county-scale is appropriate) that clearly identifies the project area.
2. A site-scale map that shows the location of project elements.
3. One to three photos of the site may be included if they facilitate understanding key site conditions.
4. Non-profit applicants should include the following with the applications:
   1. Letter of Determination from the Internal Revenue Service indicating current IRS 501(c)(3) status.
   2. Completed [Non-Profit Organization Pre-Award Questionnaire](https://scc.ca.gov/files/2019/07/SCC_Grant_Appl-NPO_PreAwardQuestionnaire.pdf) (*Note: Applicants who have submitted the Non-Profit Questionnaire in the past two years do not need to resubmit.*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| APPLICATION PROCEDURES |  |  |

1. The Application Guidelines and Application Template are available for download on the CWRGP [webpage](https://scwrp.org/community-grants-apply/). Your completed application must be submitted via the **Apply**button by May 12, 2023 at 5pm PT (please see below for further instruction).
2. If applying electronically is not possible, hard copy applications must be postmarked by May 12, 2023, and sent to:

**Maravilla Clemens**

**California State Coastal Conservancy**

**1515 Clay St. 10th Floor**

**Oakland, CA 94612**

Please follow the following guidelines for electronically submitting proposals through the website: application cover page, project narrative, project budget, and attachments should be uploaded as ***one*** file in Microsoft Word or converted to a pdf file if possible. Name the electronic file by the project name. Do not embed picturesin the proposal text; place them in the file after the proposal narrative and have them well labelled. To ensure that your electronic file is not excessively large, make sure your photos are an appropriate size.

**INQUIRIES** should be directed to:

Maravilla Clemens

California State Coastal Conservancy

[maravilla.clemens@scc.ca.gov](mailto:Meghan.Martinez@scc.ca.gov)