



# **POLICIES AND PROCEDURES HANDBOOK**

**October 2024**

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## Important Links

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[NCRP Leadership Council, Technical Peer Review Committee, Executive & Ad Hoc Committee Membership](#)

[NCRP Leadership Council Motions and Direction](#)

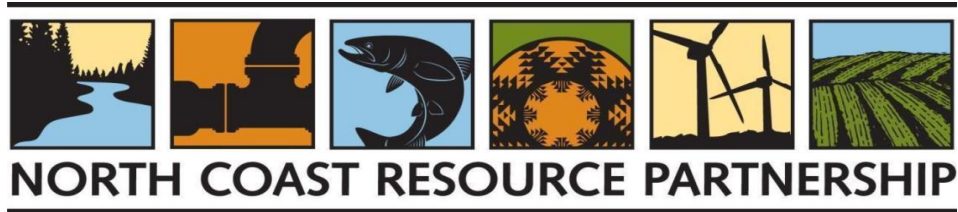
[NCRP Website Useful Links](#)

[NCRP Projects](#)

[NCRP Tribal Representation Process](#)

[NCRP Memorandum of Mutual Understandings](#)

[NCRP Memorandum of Mutual Understandings Signatories](#)



## **I. BACKGROUND: NORTH COAST RESOURCE PARTNERSHIP HANDBOOK**

First developed in 2011, the North Coast Resource Partnership (NCRP) Policies and Procedures Handbook documents the decisions, history and approved institutional processes and protocols of the NCRP, including the governance structure, decision making process, technical review process, staff and consultant roles, NCRP mission, guiding principles, goals and objectives, project prioritization criteria, and all Leadership Council (LC) decisions and policies approved during NCRP quarterly meetings. The Handbook also lists projects identified and funded by the NCRP, and all NCRP plans and strategies reflect the guidance included in the Handbook. The NCRP Handbook is a “living document” and is reviewed, updated and approved by the LC on an annual or as-needed basis, during NCRP quarterly meetings.

By providing an historical overview of the NCRP and documenting its policies and processes, the Handbook supports long-term institutional knowledge, the orientation and onboarding of new Leadership Council and Technical Peer Review Committee members, and provides valuable information in a transparent fashion to NCRP funders and other partners. The NCRP is guided by a [Memorandum of Mutual Understandings](#) (MOMU), signed by over 140 agencies, multiple Tribes, non-governmental organizations, watershed groups, special districts, private consultants, and other stakeholders - signifying their support for NCRP principles, goals, planning and implementation processes. The MOMU is updated occasionally as needed, whereas the Handbook is updated at least annually.

## **II. NORTH COAST RESOURCE PARTNERSHIP MISSION, GUIDING PRINCIPLES, GOALS & OBJECTIVES**

### **NCRP Mission**

Enhance the watersheds and communities of the North Coast region through integrated, multi-objective planning and project implementation in collaboration with North Coast partners.

### **NCRP Guiding Principles**

All NCRP actions and processes are guided by the following principles:

- Local leadership and governance – collaborative Tribal and county direction and decision making
- Transparency in all actions – meetings, decisions, planning and project selection
- Local knowledge and local autonomy – respecting the autonomy and unique perspectives and preferences of Tribes, counties, and partners
- Focus on common ground for the enhancement of all communities and watersheds
- Equity and fairness in governance, engagement, participation, and all decisions and actions

- Acknowledge Tribes as Sovereign Nations, recognize Tribal leadership, recognize Tribal expertise and responsibility of Tribes as stewards, and support meaningful Tribal consultation, collaboration and involvement
- Increase quality of life in economically disadvantaged, underrepresented and underserved communities
- Use the best available local and regional information, traditional knowledge, science and data to prioritize investments
- Align with and synchronize local, state, federal, Tribal priorities
- Integrate multiple goals and objectives into all activities
- All planning and capacity building focused on outcomes on the ground and in communities
- Attract and leverage funding for the region, and use all funding effectively and transparently
- Communicate and amplify the importance of the North Coast Region and the need for investment
- Develop plans and projects at multiple scales – ranging from regional to local
- Consider the long-term impacts of NCRP actions and investments

## **NCRP Goals and Objectives**

### **GOAL 1: SHARED VISION THROUGH INCLUSIVE, MULTI-BENEFIT REGIONAL PLANNING**

1. Develop, Collect and Analyze Data at a Variety of Spatial Scales to Inform Priority Projects/Actions
2. Engage with Regional Partners to Inform High Quality Planning and Implementation
3. Integrate indigenous science and Traditional Ecological Knowledge in collaboration with Tribes to incorporate these practices into North Coast Projects and Plans
4. Respect Tribal Sovereignty, Local Autonomy and Local Knowledge in NCRP Planning and Implementation
5. Work across Jurisdictional Boundaries to Achieve Common Objectives Effectively and Efficiently

### **GOAL 2: HEALTHY ECOSYSTEMS, HABITATS AND SPECIES**

6. Work across Jurisdictional Boundaries to Achieve Common Objectives Effectively and Efficiently
7. Conserve, Enhance and Restore Watersheds and Ecosystems that Support Biological Diversity

### **GOAL 3: REDUCED OR AVOIDED EMISSIONS AND ENERGY INDEPENDENCE**

8. Avoid Emissions via Land Management and Policies
9. Promote Local Energy Independence, Water/ Energy Use Efficiency and Infrastructure Enhancements
10. Protect and Enhance Forest Based Carbon

### **GOAL 4: CLEAN AND ABUNDANT WATER FOR HUMAN COMMUNITIES**

11. Ensure Water Supply Reliability and Quality
12. Protect and Enhance Groundwater Resources
13. Improve Drinking Water Quality and Water Related Infrastructure to Protect Public Health
14. Protect and Enhance Watersheds and Ecosystems that Provide Water Quality and Supply Benefits

### **GOAL 5: HEALTHY, SAFE AND RESILIENT COMMUNITIES**

15. Address Climate Change and Extreme Event Effects, Impacts and Vulnerabilities

## GOAL 6: VITAL AND SUSTAINABLE LOCAL ECONOMIES

16. Document and Share the Sustainable Economic Benefits of Working Landscapes and Natural Areas
17. Ensure that Disadvantaged and Underrepresented Communities Benefit from Initiatives
18. Prioritize Plans, Projects and Actions that Result in Long Term Sustainability of Jobs & Revenues

### III. NORTH COAST RESOURCE PARTNERSHIP STRUCTURE AND ROLES

Convened in 2005, the NCRP is an innovative, stakeholder-driven collaboration among Tribes, local government, NGOs, agencies, RCDs, and other interested groups and partners focused on healthy watersheds, safe and healthy communities, and economic vitality for the North Coast Region. The NCRP Region includes all or part of seven North Coast counties (Del Norte, Siskiyou, Modoc, Humboldt, Trinity, Mendocino, and Sonoma) and the homelands of North Coast Tribes. The NCRP is governed by a Leadership Council comprised of Tribal and county representatives from the North Coast region. The LC sets direction, establishes criteria and investment targets, and makes all decisions for the NCRP. The LC is supported by the Technical Peer Review Committee (TPRC), an advisory body to the LC that provides scientific and technical expertise. The LC and committees are described in more detail below. Current membership is outlined on the NCRP Leadership Council, Technical Peer Review Committee, Executive & Ad Hoc Committee Membership webpage. The NCRP Leadership Council decisions and other policy direction to date are listed in detail on the NCRP Leadership Council Motions and Direction webpage. The NCRP structure and the following roles are subject to revision based on the regular review and decision-making process of the Leadership Council. Updates to structures and roles will be reflected in the Handbook as changes are made.

#### Leadership Council

The NCRP Leadership Council is a nationally unique governance structure – with sovereign Tribal nations and local county governments working in an integrated, collaborative fashion to achieve the mission and goals of the NCRP while representing the priorities of their constituents. Building collaboration between Tribes and counties is an important opportunity to develop and maintain trust while achieving the shared objectives of North Coast Tribes, counties and other partners. Leadership Council members represent the NCRP in outreach to local communities, state and federal legislators and agency staff, and support the alignment of Tribal, federal, state and local priorities.

The NCRP Leadership Council (LC) consists of two Board of Supervisors' appointees and alternates from each of the seven counties and three Tribal representatives and alternates selected by the North Coast Tribes according to the "Tribal Representation Process" as described below and on the [NCRP Tribal Representation](#) webpage with related Tribal nomination and voting documents. The NCRP LC nominates and elects two Co-Chairs (one Tribal and one county) and two Vice-Chairs (one Tribal and one county) on an as-needed basis and each position is brought before the LC for reconsideration and appointment every two years.

The NCRP Leadership Council provides strategic direction and oversight to the NCRP planning process - making all decisions and guiding the work of the staff team by setting criteria, targets and direction. Each member of the

Leadership Council has one vote and the majority of LC decisions to date have been unanimous. When decisions are not unanimous, the majority votes prevail. The NCRP LC is committed to transparency and inclusion, supporting input from stakeholders from throughout the region and beyond, as well as information sharing via the NCRP website, meetings, and workshops. All meetings are noticed in advance, open to the public, and all meeting summaries and information are posted on the NCRP website. NCRP meetings and activities are in compliance with the Brown Act as well as the standards of the California Fair Political Practices Commission.

All NCRP Leadership Council, Technical Peer Review Committee members - and the entities that appointed them - are required to be signatories to the Memorandum of Mutual Understandings (MOMU).

### **Tribal Representation Process & Inclusion of North Coast Tribes**

Tribes in the North Coast determine their own representation and approval of the [NCRP Tribal Representation Process](#). Together there are twelve (12) Tribal seats available in the North Coast. Of these, three (3) are Leadership Council, three (3) are Technical Peer Review Committee (TPRC) and six (6) are Alternates. Federal recognition is not a criterion to participate in the representation process. Regional Tribes recognize the Tribes in their own region for selection of NCRP representative purposes. Tribes in each Voting District (North, Central and South) are given the opportunity to nominate a person that they feel is qualified for each vacant seat in their District, and to select from those nominated to fill those positions through selection by their self-appointed Voting Delegate. Tribal representatives meet on a regular basis to receive updates from the NCRP Tribal Engagement Director, provide direction to Tribal staff, and provide recommendations to the Tribal Leadership Council members to carry forward in Executive Committee and NCRP Quarterly Meetings.

### **Executive Committee**

The NCRP Executive Committee is a standing committee comprised of the LC Co-Chairs (one Tribal & one county), Co-Vice-Chairs (one Tribal & one county), and two additional members (one Tribal & one county). The LC reconsiders the members' appointment every two years or on an as-needed basis. The Executive Committee provides day-to-day leadership for the NCRP, providing guidance to the NCRP staff team, reviewing and signing letters of support, representing the NCRP with legislators and key agency partners and making time-sensitive decisions on behalf of the NCRP. Any time sensitive decisions made by the Executive Committee reflect previous LC direction and are consistent with LC approved goals and objectives. Decisions are made by unanimous or majority vote. When majority vote cannot be reached, the decision is brought before the full Leadership Council for consideration. Executive Committee decisions are reported via email and provided as an update to the full LC at their next quarterly NCRP meeting. A listing of current LC Executive Committee members can be found on the [NCRP Leadership Council, Technical Peer Review Committee, Executive & Ad Hoc Committee Membership](#) webpage.

### **Technical Peer Review Committee**

The Technical Peer Review Committee (TPRC) is comprised of two technical & scientific staff (and alternates) appointed by LC members or the Board of Supervisors from each county, as well as Tribal representatives (and alternates) selected by the North Coast Tribes according to the "Tribal Selection & Representation Process" as posted on the NCRP website with related Tribal nomination and voting documents. The TPRC nominates and

submits prospective Co-Chair nominees for LC selection and approval on an as-needed or biennial basis. The TPRC provides support to NCRP and the LC via the evaluation of projects and plan development. The TPRC works with NCRP staff to develop criteria and protocols for project evaluation and selection that are considered and approved by the LC. Expertise on the TPRC includes – but is not limited to - fisheries, traditional ecological knowledge, ecology, engineering, geology, agriculture, climate change, forest health, Tribal cultural fire, watershed planning and management, water infrastructure and energy. A listing of current TPRC members can be found on the [NCRP Leadership Council, Technical Peer Review Committee, Executive & Ad Hoc Committee Membership](#) webpage.

### **Ad Hoc Committees**

The NCRP Leadership Council forms Ad Hoc Committees on an as-needed basis to address specific issues or topics. These committees are not subject to the Brown Act and are disbanded once the topic has been addressed and outcomes have been reported to the Leadership Council. NCRP Ad Hoc Committees must comprise less than a quorum of the LC and may include members of the LC and TPRC, as well as the NCRP core staff team and consultants. Ad Hoc Committees work closely with the NCRP staff team to advise and guide plans and criteria that will be considered by the LC.

### **Core NCRP Staff Team**

The core NCRP staff team is comprised of representatives from Sonoma Water, the County of Humboldt, the California Indian Environmental Alliance, and West Coast Watershed, and the staff designated on behalf of each entity as needed. The staff team reports to the NCRP Leadership Council and works collaboratively with the Technical Peer Review Committee, Ad Hoc Committees, funding agencies, partners, and the community. The staff team leads the day-to-day coordination of the NCRP and implements the direction and decisions of the entire LC (or the Leadership Council's approved designees, such as the Executive Committee, TPRC Co-Chairs, or Ad Hoc Committees). In addition to executing the direction of the LC, the NCRP staff team is responsible for collaborative work planning, project management, communications, consultant management, representing the NCRP at meetings and events, execution of high quality NCRP work products, community engagement, and providing quarterly forecasting and reporting to the Leadership Council, funders, and the public. The staff team meets on a regular basis to carry out the mission of the NCRP and the directives of the LC. The staff team is responsible for working collaboratively to prepare and provide recommendations for LC decisions and direction. If staff team consensus is not reached, the staff team will prepare and present different scenarios for consideration by the LC.

Reflective of the NCRP focus on an integrated program led by Tribes and counties, the NCRP staff team is responsive to and supportive of all partners in the region – including Tribes, counties, agencies, cities, watershed groups, etc. The Tribal Engagement staff have an enhanced and specific role to support Tribal participation and engagement in the NCRP and receive direction and guidance from Tribal LC members and Tribal TPRC members to advance Tribal support and to facilitate the Tribal nomination and voting processes.

Following is more detailed information about the individual roles of the NCRP core staff team.

## **Sonoma Water**

Since the inception of the NCRP, substantial matching funds and allocation of staff resources have been provided by the Sonoma County Water Agency (Sonoma Water) in support of achieving the mission of the NCRP. Sonoma Water supports the strategic planning, outreach, legislative and funding application elements on behalf of the NCRP, and has contracted with West Coast Watershed to lead these efforts. Sonoma Water assigns staff to serve as part of the core staff and consultant team to advise and coordinate on strategy, key initiatives, legislative and community affairs, plan development, funding applications, meeting planning and outreach.

NCRP Staff and Title: Molly Oshun, Sonoma Water Climate Resiliency Engineer

## **Regional Grant Administration – County of Humboldt**

Since April 28, 2005, the LC has consistently approved the County of Humboldt to act as the regional applicant, recipient of, and Regional Administrator of grant funds on behalf of the NCRP and authorizes an allocation of each grant to Support Humboldt's administrative role. To date the County of Humboldt has successfully managed millions of dollars in grant funding for hundreds of NCRP planning and implementation projects. The Humboldt Regional Administrator Team (Admin Team) provides QA/QC on all invoices and progress reports submitted by sub-grantees prior to compiling regular grant progress reports and invoices to submit to the granting agency. Humboldt County contracts with NCRP consultants - CIEA and West Coast Watershed as members of the core staff team - to carry out the core functions described below. The County of Humboldt Admin Team maintains auditable files and acts as the liaison between local project sponsors, NCRP consultants, and granting agencies to streamline communications. As needed, the County of Humboldt assigns County of Humboldt staff to act as part of the NCRP staff team to advise and coordinate on plan development, funding applications, work planning, project management and reporting, meeting planning and outreach. The County of Humboldt establishes and maintains project-related risk management practices to protect the County and the NCRP from liability.

NCRP Staff Lead and Title: Cybelle Immitt, NCRP Director of Administration and Contracting

## **Consultants**

The NCRP relies on an array of consultants to support its planning and implementation efforts - some are long term consultants that play a foundational role in the ongoing functions and processes of the NCRP, while others are short term technical consultants hired for a specific need. All consultants will be required to sign the NCRP MOMU, and their contracts will confirm that they have read, understand and commit to the information and guidance included in the NCRP Policies and Procedures Handbook.

Following is a list of the current long-term consultants who act as members of the NCRP core staff team, and a description of their roles and work on behalf of the NCRP.



## **NCRP Lead Consultant - West Coast Watershed (WCW)**

*Responsible for LC & TPRC Coordination, Strategic Planning, Project Development, Funding Applications, Plan Development, Data Development, Partner Engagement, Outreach and Communications, Technical Consultant Contracting, Oversight and Coordination*

West Coast Watershed (WCW) serves the NCRP under contract to Sonoma Water and Humboldt County to support the ongoing functioning of the NCRP and strategic execution of the NCRP mission. In close collaboration with assigned staff from Humboldt County, Sonoma Water and CIEA, WCW is responsible for the following tasks.

- LC & TPRC Coordination & Strategic Planning: plans and convenes NCRP governance meetings (LC, TPRC, Executive Committee); supports the Executive Committee, Ad Hoc Committees and LC in decision making and tees up decisions and/or staff recommendations to the Leadership Council; tracks LC decisions; creates and updates policy and messaging documents; regularly updates this Handbook and MOMU for LC consideration and approval
- Partner Engagement, Outreach and Communications: plans and convenes NCRP stakeholder workshops, conferences and other meetings; maintains the NCRP website and communication tools; supports the Executive Committee, Ad Hoc Committees and LC in decision making, legislative and other outreach; represents the NCRP at meetings, conferences and during legislative testimony
- Project Development, Funding Applications, Plan Development, Data Development: creates and implements programs to identify, prioritize and support project development; produces NCRP data sets, research, assessments and plans, ensuring project identification, prioritization and evaluation; supports the TPRC in project evaluation and ranking; develops and coordinates funding applications; manages and coordinates spatial data and mapping, databases and project management tools; provides project management and performance tracking, including tracking of all NCRP projects, plans, sub-agreements, technical assistance and capacity investments.
- Technical Consultant Contracting, Oversight and Coordination: hires and oversees technical consultants focused on spatial analysis and planning, water and wastewater infrastructure enhancement, forest and watershed health, capacity investments, research and technical writing, graphic design, and other duties as required or assigned.

NCRP Staff and Title: Karen Gaffney, Director of Strategic Planning and Communications

NCRP Staff and Title: Katherine Gledhill, Director of Project Development

## **NCRP Tribal Engagement Coordinator - California Indian Environmental Alliance (CIEA)**

*Responsible for Tribal Outreach and Engagement, Strategic Planning, Project Development, Tribal Technical Consultant Contracting, Oversight and Coordination*

CIEA was recruited and approved by the NCRP Tribal Representatives in 2014 to coordinate Tribal representation, engagement in the NCRP, and to coordinate capacity and technical assistance to support Tribes. CIEA coordinates and facilitates Tribal outreach, engagement and Tribal participation in NCRP programs, ensuring that Tribal perspectives are included in all NCRP planning documents, strategic planning, messaging and communications, advocating for state and federal resources for North Coast Tribes, representing the NCRP at meetings and conferences, policy and legislative review to support Tribal Sovereignty and ensure Tribal access

to programs, performing outreach to North Coast Tribes, ensure that Tribes are supported to participate in NCRP planning efforts, regional workshops and trainings, quarterly meetings, and applying for project funding. CIEA facilitates Tribe-to-Tribe meetings, meetings with Tribes and regional agencies, and coordinates and provides technical assistance to Tribes, including hiring, overseeing and working with technical consultants to meet Tribal needs. CIEA coordinates and facilitates the nomination and voting process for Tribal selection of the LC and TPRC Tribal Representatives and the coordination meetings of selected NCRP Tribal Representatives and regional Tribes. In coordination with NCRP staff team, CIEA staff represents the NCRP at conferences and meetings at the local, state and federal level. In close collaboration with assigned staff from Humboldt County, Sonoma Water and WCW, CIEA works to ensure effective communication with the NCRP Tribal Representatives on meeting agendas, strategic plans and policy decisions of the NCRP. CIEA acts as a resource to Tribal sponsored projects and integrates findings into wider programs.

NCRP Staff and Title: Sherri Norris, Director of Tribal Engagement and Programs

NCRP Staff and Title: Javier Silva, Director of Tribal Technical Assistance

#### IV. NCRP FUNDING AWARDS

GRANT PROGRAM	YEAR	AWARD
Proposition 50, NCIRWM Planning Grant	2005	\$500,000
Proposition 50, Implementation Grant, Round 1	2006	\$25,000,000
Proposition 50, Implementation Grant, Round 2	2007	\$2,079,000
Proposition 50 Implementation Supplemental Funding	2010	\$2,176,860
CEC Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant	2010	\$959,117
Proposition 50, DWR directed funding for Water & Wastewater Service Provider Outreach & Support Program	2011	\$500,000
Proposition 84, NCIRWMP Planning Grant	2011	\$1,000,000
Proposition 84, NCIRWMP Implementation Grant, Round 1	2011	\$8,222,000
Proposition 84, NCIRWMP Implementation Grant, Round 2	2013	\$5,386,000
Strategic Growth Council, Sustainable Communities Grant	2014	\$1,000,000
NCRP 2014 Proposition 84, IRWM Drought Project Grant	2014	\$8,700,000
NCRP 2015 Proposition 84, IRWM Project Grant	2015	\$11,047,939
NCRP Proposition 1, Disadvantaged Community Involvement funding	2017	\$2,650,000
California Natural Resource Agency, NCRP Regional Forest and Fire Capacity Program	2019	\$4,037,500
Proposition 1, Round 1 IRWM Implementation Project Grant	2020	\$12,720,000
California Natural Resources Agency, NCRP Regional Forest and Fire Capacity Program, Round 1	2019	\$4,037,500

<b>GRANT PROGRAM</b>	<b>YEAR</b>	<b>AWARD</b>
California Natural Resources Agency, NCRP Regional Forest and Fire Capacity Program, Round 2	2021	\$13,560,000
Humboldt Area Foundation and Wild Rivers Community Foundation, Fire Response Capacity Building	2021	\$500,000
Governor's Office of Planning and Research Woody Feedstock Aggregation Pilot Program	2022	\$700,000
NCRP Urban & Multibenefit Drought Relief Grant	2022	\$3,592,756
NCRP Urban & Multibenefit Drought Relief Tribal and Underrepresented Set-Aside Grant	2022	\$5,000,000
Actionable Lidar-Based Data for Wildfire Prevention Planning, Response, and Rehabilitation on California's North Coast	2022	\$123,656
Riparian Corridor Regional Work Plan	2022	\$45,000
CAL FIRE, NCRP CAL FIRE Regional Pilot Grant	2023	\$10,000,000
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$123,037,328</b>

# **Appendix A**

## **NCRP Policies**

### **2024**

# NCRP POLICIES, 2024

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## Background

The North Coast Resource Partnership (NCRP) is led by a Leadership Council (LC) comprised of voting members from North Coast Tribes and counties. The LC is the governance and decision-making body for the NCRP, and sets policy on a regular basis to provide direction to the NCRP Technical Peer Review Committee (TPRC) and NCRP staff. The NCRP has a strong focus on transparent decision making and regional equity, and seeks to share and disseminate its policies and processes so that stakeholders in the North Coast region have a clear understanding of the decision-making process that is used by the NCRP. The policies and processes of the NCRP are regularly reviewed and updated by the LC based on new information and the needs and opportunities facing the NCRP and the North Coast region. Approved policy updates are included and/or referenced in the NCRP Handbook.

## A. MEMORANDUM OF MUTUAL UNDERSTANDINGS, 2022

The Memorandum of Mutual Understandings (MOMU) developed in 2004 and updated in 2010 and 2022, defined the purpose, general goals, definitions and mutual understandings of North Coast agencies towards developing a North Coast Integrated Regional Water Management Plan<sup>1</sup> and planning process to increase regional coordination and collaboration to obtain funding for water-related projects. The MOMU, delineated the North Coast boundary and described the roles, composition and decision-making process of the Leadership Council (LC) and Technical Peer Review Committee (TPRC). The 2022 MOMU established adherence to the Ralph M. Brown Act and outlined the Tribal Representation Process.

## NCRP STRUCTURE, ROLES, RESPONSIBILITIES, STAFFING, 2011 – current

During the July 2011 NCRP Meeting, the LC adopted the NCRP Handbook that described the roles and responsibilities of the project team: LC as decision-making body, TPRC providing technical review and advice, Humboldt County as contract administrator & overseeing project implementation, and Sonoma Water providing ongoing support & direction for planning & fund development. During the December 2020 meeting, the LC updated the governance structure and established the Executive Committee comprised of the Leadership Council Co-Chairs, Co-Vice-Chairs, a fifth member nominated and approved by the LC and a sixth member nominated by the Tribal representatives and approved by the LC. Additionally, the LC allowed the formation of Ad Hoc Committees on an as needed basis to address a short duration issue or topic. The NCRP Handbook has been updated on an annual basis and includes detailed descriptions of the NCRP roles and election processes.

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<sup>1</sup> The North Coast Integrated Regional Water Management Plan was the original name of the North Coast Resource Partnership.

## **B. NCRP PROJECT REVIEW AND SELECTION PROCESS GUIDELINES, ongoing**

### **Background**

The North Coast Resource Partnership (NCRP) has an established project prioritization, evaluation, and selection process which is included in the NCRP Policies and Procedures Handbook and is regularly updated. It relies on objective regional-scale information (including biophysical and socio-economic data), local knowledge and expertise, as well as a diversity of criteria informed by partner and funder goals and objectives. NCRP's process for project evaluation and selection relies on an objective ranking and scoring process that is shared with project sponsors and the general public, and is conducted via multiple steps to ensure equity and transparency at each phase.

### **Source Funding Specific Guidelines**

The NCRP may be awarded grant or contract funding from state, federal or local agencies, and philanthropic organizations that include specific requirements and guidelines that allow for regional funding dissemination for targeted projects according to the funding program goals. Specific guidelines will be developed for each NCRP funding opportunity that aligns with the funder's requirements, solicitation process and technical project selection criteria. These source funding specific guidelines will tier from and align with the NCRP Project Evaluation and Selection protocol and Leadership Council directed guidelines.

### **Adaptive Planning and Prioritization Framework**

Regional projects are identified via regional assessments, review of regional plans, interviews, solicitations, technical assistance, and projects uploaded into the NCRP Project Tracker, that reflect the priorities of regional partners. NCRP's prioritization and selection of projects relies on an Adaptive Planning and Prioritization Framework (APPF) that uses the best available science and data – combined with local knowledge and expertise – to prioritize geographic areas for investment in the North Coast region and support project identification. The APPF includes processes that integrate regional assessments with local knowledge and expertise, combined with rigorous, equitable, and transparent evaluation and selection processes and performance reporting. This framework intentionally integrates and aligns with the goals and objectives of partner agencies and has processes in place to:

- a. Ensure that there is an equitable opportunity for all project sponsors to participate in regional, state, and federal funding opportunities, via competitive and publicly accessible Requests for Proposals
- b. Evaluate and rank projects via the NCRP Technical Peer Review Committee (TPRC) and a technical expert team where appropriate
- c. Ensure transparent and criteria-driven decision making by elected and appointed members of the NCRP Leadership Council, representing North Coast Tribes and counties
- d. Support project sponsors with technical assistance to ensure project readiness and ensure equitable access to NCRP investments
- e. Document all projects in a regional NCRP Project Tracking tool
- f. Report on performance for individual projects and the regional portfolio of projects

## **DESCRIPTION OF THE NCRP PROJECT EVALUATION ROLES**

### **Leadership Council**

The Leadership Council (LC) is the governing and decision-making body for the NCRP. The composition of the LC and decision-making process is defined in the NCRP Policies and Procedures Handbook. The role of the LC in the NCRP project review and selection process is to set policy, and establish the decision-making criteria and framework for the process and to ensure that the process is fair, open and transparent. As the NCRP's governing and decision-making body, the LC provides direction about how the project evaluation and selection process aligns with the NCRP priorities by defining project review and selection guidelines (see LC Directed Guidelines for Project Scoring and Selection section). Considering the review and recommendations from the Technical Peer Review Committee, the LC takes final action to approve all projects for the NCRP and approves the region's highest priority projects for grant submittals. As defined in the Handbook, the LC is subject to the Ralph M. Brown Act and is committed to transparency and inclusion, supporting input from partners throughout the region. All NCRP meetings are noticed in advance, open to the public, with opportunities for public comment on every agenda, and all meeting summaries and information are posted on the NCRP website.

### **Technical Peer Review Committee**

The Technical Peer Review Committee (TPRC) is advisory to the LC and evaluates and makes recommendations based on technical expertise and scientific data. The composition of the TPRC includes appointees from the NCRP region's Tribes and counties, and is defined in the NCRP Policies and Procedures Handbook. TPRC meetings adhere to the Ralph M. Brown Act. The TPRC is comprised of technical staff with expertise that includes fisheries, traditional ecological knowledge, ecology, engineering, geology, agriculture, climate change, forest health, watershed planning and management, water infrastructure and energy. The role of the TPRC in the project review and selection process is to evaluate projects for technical merit based on their professional judgment and expertise, as well as on guidelines developed by the LC and set by the funding solicitation. The TPRC prepares a draft suite of priority projects for review by the LC. Scoring criteria and evaluation summaries from the TPRC are available for public review. TPRC Co-Chairs facilitate the project review meetings to ensure integrity in the process and present the draft suite of priority projects to the LC during the NCRP meeting.

### **Expert Technical Consultants**

Additional technical consultants may be retained to inform the technical review process on an as needed basis. External technical consultants will not advocate for any projects, nor will they score or rank projects. They may contribute to the TPRC review process in the following ways:

- Participate in the project review meetings to answer questions and provide objective expertise
- Provide objective written review comments

### **NCRP Staff**

The role of NCRP staff during the project application, review and selection process is to facilitate and coordinate. Staff develops and coordinates project application materials; performs outreach and makes information available to the LC, TPRC and stakeholders; clarifies outstanding issues; makes sure decisions are understood; maintains

records; consolidates and summarizes TPRC review of project grant applications, and performs fact checking of state guidelines and criteria as necessary. Staff will not advocate for any projects. Per the direction of the LC, staff will support project proponents in developing the application materials where timing allows and in accordance with the source funding proposal process and eligibility requirements. The NCRP staff team is defined in the NCRP Policies and Procedures Handbook.

## **NCRP PROJECT APPLICATION, REVIEW & SELECTION PROCESS**

The NCRP project application, review and selection process is multi-stepped:

### **a) NCRP Project Solicitation and Project Information**

At the direction of the LC and when there is a funding opportunity, a call for proposals will be announced to North Coast partners. The LC will review and refine the LC directed guidelines and criteria for project scoring and selection based on NCRP goals and objectives, specific regional priorities and funding source requirements and preferences. Staff will develop and make available Project Solicitation application materials based on the NCRP priorities and the funding source solicitation and requirements. The project application materials will include an application, detailed instructions, and a clear description of scoring guidelines and evaluation criteria. Project applicants will provide application materials to NCRP staff via email or via the NCRP website. Microsoft Word and Excel files that make up the NCRP project application will be made available for reference, for application development and for submittal to NCRP staff. Staff will provide outreach, education and application support via workshops and informal meetings by phone, internet and in person.

### **b) Individual TPRC review of NCRP Project Applications**

Staff will compile and provide application materials to the TPRC for review and scoring along with scoring/evaluation forms. This will include:

- A brief summary description of each project
- Technical reference section that includes a table of contents and is limited to 50 pages
- Solicitation FAQ regarding funding round specific requirements
- For projects that received technical assistance, a brief synopsis of the type of technical assistance provided, who provided it and the status of any future technical assistance to be provided by the NCRP or other Technical Assistance entity will also be included.

A TPRC project evaluation conference call meeting will be held prior to the TPRC project review period to discuss the general review process and go over scoring definitions to ensure calibration and clarity. When packaging the project application materials for the TPRC members, a system will be developed to randomize chronology of the project applications that TPRC members review so that project applications are reviewed in different order.

The TPRC members will strive to individually review and score the NCRP project applications for technical merit based on criteria as defined by the funding solicitation, NCRP LC defined guidelines (see LC Directed Guidelines for Project Scoring and Selection section), and their professional expertise and judgment. TPRC members will review all projects referred to them unless they recuse themselves due to a potential conflict of interest (see the NCRP Conflict of Interest section). TPRC members will provide individual scores to staff for compilation. Time allowance



for the individual TPRC review of project applications will be at least 2 weeks depending on the proposal solicitation timeframe. If two weeks is not available, the Executive Committee will determine the suitable duration to meet grant solicitation needs.

#### c) Group TPRC review of NCRP Project Applications

Staff will compile all individual scores submitted by TPRC members prior to the group TPRC review meeting to determine an initial average project score; these scores are meant to facilitate discussion and will be presented at the TPRC meeting. Adhering to a high standard of professional conduct, TPRC members and staff will meet to discuss each project and may adjust their individual scores based on the group discussion. To ensure a comprehensive project proposal review process, TPRC member attendance during the entire meeting is strongly encouraged, including in-person attendance during in-person meetings. It is recommended that all TPRC members bring laptops to the review session to ensure an efficient and thorough review and the NCRP will provide a laptop for use should a TPRC member not have one. Staff will compile all updated TPRC individual scores to determine an updated average project score. TPRC review meetings are open to project proponents and the public. The agenda at a formally noticed public meeting will include a thorough review of the NCRP Conflict of Interest Guidelines as well as time for comment from the public (see Conflict of Interest and Public Input Guidelines sections below). All meeting deliberations, project scores, applicant and public input, and recusals will be recorded.

#### d) TPRC Selection of Draft Suite of NCRP Priority Projects

During the project review meeting, the TPRC will select a draft suite of NCRP Priority Projects and draft budget amounts for each project. The selection will be based on a number of factors including: technical project scores; project scalability and potential funding allowance; the overall balance of projects based on the LC's defined guidelines for project selection (see LC Directed Guidelines for Project Scoring and Selection section); and the collective ability of the projects to meet NCRP goals and be competitive for the funding opportunity. A contingency list of projects will also be developed for consideration in the event that a selected project cannot move forward for inclusion into the regional application for any reason. To ensure an open and fair project selection process, only TPRC members who have reviewed all the project proposals (excepting project recusals), provided project review scores, and participated in the majority of the TPRC group discussions can be involved in the project selection process and deliberations. All meeting deliberations, public input, and Conflict of Interest recusals will be recorded in the meeting minutes.

#### e) LC Review, Consideration and Final Approval of the Suite of NCRP Priority Projects

The NCRP LC will convene an in-person quarterly meeting held within the North Coast boundary to present, review, and approve the final list of NCRP Priority Projects. During this quarterly, publicly noticed NCRP meeting, the TPRC will provide a summary of the project review process and present their recommended draft suite of NCRP Priority Projects and contingency project list. The LC will review, may amend, and will approve by majority vote a final suite of NCRP Priority Projects and contingency projects to forward to the funding entity. During the LC's review of the draft suite of NCRP Priority Projects, the TPRC will answer questions and provide information as requested by the LC. The LC – comprised of elected public officials and elected Tribal representatives – will make their final decision based on TPRC recommendations, NCRP staff advice, LC guidelines, and other factors that they believe represent the best interest of the North Coast region. The NCRP Priority Projects list will be posted to the

website and made available to the public. Project review scores and review meeting materials will be made available to the project proponents and to the general public, upon request.

#### **f) NCRP Priority Project Application Materials for Regional Proposal**

Depending on the source funding solicitation, NCRP Priority Project proponents will be asked to provide additional project information that may include, but not be limited to, supplemental information related to funding source requirements and technical documentation that support the project. The timeframe to submit this additional information may be very short for expedited funding solicitations. In the event that sufficient additional information for a project cannot be provided within the requested timeframe, that project may not be able to be included in the regional application and another project may instead be selected from the contingency list. Where feasible, NCRP staff will provide technical assistance to project sponsors who require it.

Once the regional application has been approved and selected for funding, individual project sponsors will enter into an agreement with Humboldt County, the NCRP regional grant administrator, to implement each project. It is imperative that an agreement between a project proponent and the NCRP regional grant administrator be executed in a timely fashion.

### **GUIDELINES FOR PUBLIC INPUT AND PROJECT SPONSOR INPUT DURING THE PROJECT REVIEW PROCESS**

All TPRC project review meetings will be noticed at least 72 hours in advance and will be open and welcoming to the public. A conference call-in number will be provided for project proponents so that they may listen to the meeting and provide input during the public comment period if desired. Staff will mute the phone during breaks and include a statement in the agenda. A time keeper can be assigned to ensure that the break times follow the agenda. The meeting agenda and background materials to be used in the TPRC's decision-making will be available at the meeting location, posted to the NCRP website 72 hours in advance of the meeting, and mailed to any interested member of the public upon request.

All TPRC meeting agendas include time for public comment, which will typically be limited to 3 minutes for each speaker. Public Comment portions of the meeting are not meant to be interactive and TPRC members will not engage in discussion or debate an issue with any member of the public. Public comment and materials delivered to staff from the public will be published on the NCRP website. Project proponents, interested members of the public and members of the public will be invited to provide comment:

- on items not on the agenda;
- after the TPRC discusses the projects amongst themselves, but before the TPRC members submit their final scores;
- after the TPRC develops their draft recommended list, but before the TPRC submits their final recommendation to the LC.

### **NCRP CONFLICT OF INTEREST POLICY**

The NCRP Conflict of Interest Policy follows the California Fair Political Practices Commission (FPPC) guidelines and the intent of the guidelines to address obligations under the Political Reform Act's conflict of interest rules.

Under the FPPC rules, when a member has a conflict of interest with a specific project, that member must publicly disclose the specific nature of the conflict and recuse themselves (i.e. leave the room or remain silent) during discussion of that specific project. The FPPC guidelines seek to prevent conflicts of interest in two ways - disclosure and recusal.

"No public official at any level of state or local government shall make, participate in making or in any way attempt to use his official position to influence a governmental decision in which he knows or has reason to know he has a financial interest." (Political Reform Act; Gov. Code Section 87100)

"Assets and income of public officials which may be materially affected by their official actions should be disclosed and in appropriate circumstances the officials should be disqualified from acting in order that conflicts of interest may be avoided." (Gov. Code section 81002)

During the NCRP project review and selection process, TPRC and LC members will disclose any potential financial interest in a project. If a TPRC or LC member has a potential conflict of interest, they will be expected to recuse themselves (i.e. leave the room or remain silent) from making, participating in or in any way influencing a project scoring or selection decision.

In the interest of transparency, TPRC and LC members will also disclose any history of contribution to the project, including input in the grant development or project planning or other involvement that could potentially represent a real or perceived conflict of interest. Once disclosed, the TPRC and LC member will determine whether these actions constitute a conflict of interest or will prevent an objective review of the NCRP implementation project(s) and will determine if recusal is necessary. The LC or TPRC member may wish to request the advice of their colleagues on the LC or TPRC to make their determination.

Opportunities for disclosure and reporting will occur during the individual TPRC review of NCRP projects, during the group TPRC project review, and during the TPRC and LC selection meetings. The project score sheets will include a checklist and comment box for TPRC members to disclose potential conflict of interest. Project review score sheets and meeting notes will document any conflict of interest disclosures and recusals. In addition, the TPRC Chair(s), or his/her designee, will be selected to provide oversight during the project review meetings and act as a facilitator of TPRC discussion should conflict of interest issues arise. The TPRC Chair(s), or his/her designee, will be supported by staff to ensure the process adheres to the Conflict of Interest Policy established by the LC.

## **LEADERSHIP COUNCIL DIRECTED GUIDELINES FOR PROJECT SCORING AND SELECTION**

### **Background**

The intent of the following LC-directed project scoring and selection guidelines is to promote the implementation of NCRP goals while allowing the flexibility to address specific regional priorities and funding source requirements. These guidelines are in addition to those defined by the NCRP goals & objectives and other funding source guidelines and scoring criteria. The LC includes the following preferences and priority considerations in its decision-making process:

## Regional Representation

The LC will make every effort to ensure geographic representation by including projects from each of the seven counties and from the north, central and southern tribal areas of the North Coast region. This guideline will apply only to those projects which are eligible for funding under the NCRP and other state and federal requirements, and which have met the technical criteria established by the LC and evaluated by the Technical Peer Review Committee.

### Economically Disadvantaged Community

In an effort to build capacity and extend services to communities that are under-served and/or limited by economic barriers, the NCRP will include screening criteria that will confer additional weight to projects that, in addition to meeting other NCRP criteria, will benefit North Coast disadvantaged communities. The LC reserves the right to prioritize disadvantaged community projects, based on a project's ability to mitigate threats to public health, watershed health, and the economic and public health benefits that project implementation would bring to these communities.

### Jurisdictional Notification & Coordination

Project applicants are required to demonstrate that they have notified counties and Tribes re: proposed projects in the proposed project impact area of a particular watershed or relevant area of County or Tribal interest. Project applicants are required to demonstrate coordination and outreach to potentially interested partners including Tribes in the relevant watershed, sub-watershed or project impact area, including source and receiving water areas.

### Programmatic Integration & Balance of Project Type to effectively implement NCRP Goals & Objectives

The NCRP embraces a set of integrated [Goals and Objectives](#) related to ecosystem function and resilience, climate adaptation and energy independence, water quality and supply, economic vitality, collaboration, and the health and safety of North Coast communities.

- a) All project types should address grant requirements as well as NCRP goals, objectives, principles, and priorities.
- b) Programmatic integration and project type diversity will be achieved at the portfolio level - (e.g. small /individual projects not required to demonstrate integration of all priorities, yet they must contribute to a comprehensive suite of projects that achieve a multi-benefit, integrated program or portfolio of impactful projects).
- c) Programmatic integration and project type diversity will be achieved over time and through multiple rounds of funding, resulting in a comprehensive, impactful portfolio of projects and initiatives.
- d) Projects that provide multi-benefits will be prioritized (where all else is equal).
- e) Projects that address specific targets as identified by the LC, including specific North Coast objectives, challenges, and opportunities (e.g., promote biomass-related projects, effective in-stream flow approaches, energy retrofits, drought or flood preparedness, effective instream flow approaches or specific funding opportunities) may be prioritized by the LC during a particular funding round.

### C. NCRP GRANTS AND CONTRACTS ADMIN ALLOCATION, 2018 & 2024

During 2006-2018, 5% of each grant award was allocated to the County of Humboldt for the costs of grant administration. During the April 2018 NCRP meeting the Leadership Council authorized an allocation of up to 6% for grant administration for the Proposition 1 implementation project grant funding. During the April 2024 meeting authorized an allocation of up to 6% to cover County of Humboldt costs for grant administration/project management for all NCRP grants or contracts.

### D. PROJECT BUDGET UNDER-RUNS AND FUNDING REALLOCATION PROCESS, 2021 & 2024

Background: In some cases, a NCRP sub-grantee may complete their project under budget or otherwise not expend their entire grant allotment. Depending on the funding source, the reallocation of available funds to another project within the existing suite of projects approved by the LC may be allowed. Reallocation of funding may be necessary for a variety of reasons. Potential scenarios include: when a project is completed under-budget; or when a sub-grantee elects not to implement their approved project, or is determined to be substantially out of compliance with the sub-grantee agreement. Another potential scenario is the availability of excess funds from the grant administration budget category. In accordance with the terms of the master grant agreement, the NCRP may allow reallocation of funds to another project within the existing suite of approved projects to supplement budget short-falls and/or expand the current scope of work to increase the project benefits. Funds will not be reallocated to a project not included within *the existing suite* of projects. NCRP staff will have the discretion to determine if a portion of the reallocation is necessary to supplement the grant administration budget.

#### NCRP Project Funding Reallocation Process

1. For amounts less than \$50,000, NCRP staff will use discretion to reallocate the funds to an eligible project within the existing suite of projects with a priority for:
  - a. Supplementing budget short-falls.
  - b. Supplementing a project that received less than their requested amount during the original selection process.
2. For amounts greater than \$50,000, project funding reallocation will occur, to the greatest extent feasible, within the County or Tribal region where the original project is located and is within the existing suite of projects approved by the LC. LC members from the County or Tribal region, where the original project is located, will determine which projects receive reallocation and the amount of funding.
  - a. If the original funds are from a non-Tribal project, they will be made available to another project (Tribal or non-Tribal) within the existing suite of projects in the county where the original project was located. The LC members (Tribal and non-Tribal) representing that County will determine which projects receive reallocation and the amount of funding.
  - b. If the original funds are from a Tribal project, the funds will be made available to another Tribal project within the existing suite of Tribal projects. The Tribal LC members will determine which projects receive reallocation and the amount of funding.

3. If the County or Tribal region of origin option is not available (i.e., no projects from the County or Tribal region of origin within the project suite need additional funding):
  - a. Staff will announce the availability of funds to project proponents within the full suite of projects; staff will solicit project requests and description of need from eligible project proponents using the list of questions listed below; staff will attempt to balance the requirements of the grant agreement and the need of project sponsors to develop the supplemental information when considering a due date for this information.
  - b. Staff will determine eligible projects
  - c. TPRC ad hoc committee will be formed via email or at NCRP meeting if timing allows
  - d. Ad hoc committee will use the following criteria for project reallocation selection:
    - Alignment with original ranking and deliberations
    - Is there adequate technical and funding rationale for the supplemental request?
    - Completeness, quality of the information, and level of detail of supplemental submission
    - Based on the information provided is there a compelling need for additional funds?
    - Is the amount of requested funds reasonable for the nature of the work proposed?
  - e. Ad hoc committee will develop project reallocation option recommendations considering the following direction:
    - Provide the minimum need before moving to max/larger amounts
    - Provide for existing project need before moving on to expanded need
  - f. LC will review and approve recommendations at the next LC meeting
  - g. TPRC ad hoc committee will be disbanded.

Questions for soliciting project requests and description of need from eligible project proponents:

#### Budget Augmentation of Existing Approved Project

- What is the minimum amount of funds that would meaningfully address your budget shortfall within the timeframe of the master grant agreement?
- What is the maximum amount of funding that would meaningfully address your budget shortfall within the timeframe of the master grant agreement?
- Within your original approved project work plan, where would you allocate the additional funds, if awarded?
- How would the additional funding help you achieve the benefits you already committed to?
- What is the technical and funding rationale for the supplemental request?

#### Project Expansion

- What is the minimum amount of funds that would meaningfully address your budget needs for an expanded project?
- What is the maximum amount of funding that would meaningfully address your budget needs for an expanded project?
- Please outline tasks needed for an expansion of your original approved project.
- How will the additional funding help you achieve more benefits than you already committed to?
- What is the technical and funding rationale for the project expansion request?

## **E. NCRP TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE SELECTION PROCESS, 2018, 2020, 2022 & 2024**

### **Background**

During the January 2018 NCRP meeting, the NCRP LC adopted a process for selection of entities to receive technical assistance based on a Water and Wastewater Service Provider Needs Assessment in North Coast disadvantaged communities to better understand the capacity, training and project needs in the region as part of the Prop 1 NCRP Disadvantaged Community and Tribal Involvement (DACTI) program funding. Technical Assistance for North Coast Tribes was identified through a subsequent process led by the North Coast Tribal Representatives and the Tribal Engagement Coordinator. These processes established the foundation of the NCRP assessment-based technical assistance program.

The technical assistance process is subject to review and refinement per recommendations of the TPRC, NCRP staff, and the current Grant Program Guidelines, technical assistance funding opportunities and requirements, and is approved by the LC.

The NCRP Technical Assistance approach was refined in April 2020, to accommodate RFFC program goals/objectives and guidelines, as well as to direct staff to distribute a Technical Assistance Request for Proposals throughout the region to solicit for DACTI and RFFC project development technical assistance proposals. This established the solicitation-based and local project sponsor (LPS) directed technical assistance program. The LC also directed that oversight of this process would be provided by the RFFC, NCRP Prop 1 DACTI and DACTI Tribal ad hoc committees.

In January 2022, the LC approved an amendment to this policy enabling staff to evaluate and select project proposals using the criteria developed by the Ad Hoc committees and based on available funding.

### **Technical Assistance**

Based on funding availability, NCRP Technical Assistance will include both assessment-based and solicitation-based local project sponsor driven approaches to ensure that technical assistance is made available based on economic challenge and capacity need, as well as project development needs that – when addressed by the NCRP TA program – can support the effective achievement of the NCRP mission, goals and objectives and achieve beneficial impact in the region.

### **Local Project Sponsor Driven Technical Assistance (solicitation-based)**

The NCRP will continue its solicitation for concept proposals from eligible entities throughout the North Coast region that align with the Goals and Objectives of the NCRP and the source funding. The concept proposals will briefly describe the project, probable outcomes, and the nature of the technical assistance and capacity support requested.

Proposals for technical assistance and capacity support will be evaluated based on a selection process and selection criteria developed by the NCRP ad hoc committees appointed by the NCRP Leadership Council; see

criteria below. Technical assistance proposals and capacity support will be evaluated and selected by the staff team using the criteria developed by the Ad Hoc committees based on available funding. Projects scored below 30, will not be considered for funding.

Through a RFQ process, NCRP staff will contract with a team of technical regional experts to provide one-on-one technical assistance and capacity building for the selected technical assistance projects. The typical value of technical assistance provided is in the range of \$5,000 to \$15,000 per entity. The NCRP contracting entity (Humboldt, CIEA or WCW) will be determined through work planning and budget deliberations with the full NCRP core staff team, including annual targets as determined by the LC. Staff will regularly evaluate and make recommendations for program refinement during these regular work planning meetings, and projections and progress will be reported to the LC on a quarterly basis, with the intent of program evaluation and refinement by the LC.

All proposals, scopes of work, final reports, performance measures and deliverables will be documented and uploaded to the NCRP Project Tracker, which is a key tool for tracking NCRP project progress.

### **Assessment-based Technical Assistance**

The NCRP will establish a programmatic and proactive approach to technical assistance and support based on results of a regional needs assessment and annual targets as determined by the LC. The program may include a wide-array of technical assistance, trainings and capacity enhancement support activities based on the needs identified by the assessments. Benefits of partner participation in the assessment process include: credible documentation of need, amplification of need to funding agencies and long-term capacity planning at the local and regional level.

The regional needs assessment driven investments will be prioritized based on a selection process and selection criteria developed by the NCRP ad hoc committees appointed by the NCRP Leadership Council. Building upon the success of and lessons learned from the previous Tribal DACTI assessment-based TA program, RFFC program evaluations related to capacity, and the Humboldt Area Foundation demonstration project focused on capacity investments for Tribal fire departments and organizations. NCRP intends to continue to support a programmatic TA program for Tribes in the North Coast. This Assessment-based Technical Assistance for North Coast Tribes will be selected through a subsequent process developed by the North Coast Tribal Representatives and the Director of Tribal Engagement and approved by the LC.

The programmatic approach will be determined through work planning with the full NCRP core staff team and/or with the Tribal Representatives. Projections and progress will be reported to the LC on a quarterly basis. Budget considerations will include annual targets as determined by the LC.

All project descriptions, scopes of work, final reports, performance measures and deliverables will be documented and uploaded to the NCRP Project Tracker, which is a key tool for tracking NCRP project progress.



<b>NCRP PROJECT PROPOSAL SCORING CRITERIA</b>	<b>WEIGHTING FACTOR</b>	<b>RANGE OF POINTS</b>
<b>ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA</b>	N/A	y/n
Is the project sponsor an eligible applicant?		
Is the project type eligible for the current solicitation?		
Is the project sponsor a Tribal or disadvantaged organization?		
Does the project serve a Tribal or disadvantaged community? Does the project align with the goals/objectives of the NCRP and the funding source? Will the TA support leverage substantial outcomes related to these goals/objectives? If the project is located on private land, do the primary benefits provide direct public good?		
<b>REASONABLE NEED</b>	N/A	y/n
Is the financial need clear for this TA support? Are the project technical assistance needs reasonable and justifiable?		
Can the needs be effectively addressed by the technical assistance team?		
<b>PROPONENT CAPACITY INFORMATION</b>		
Does the proposal demonstrate that the sponsor/project team has successful outcomes, permitting viability and work products for projects similar in nature to the project proposal submitted?	1	0-10
<b>PROJECT DESCRIPTION</b>		
Does the Project Description include a clear problem statement, intended purpose and appropriate solution?	2	(0 – 10 X 2)
<b>PROJECT GOALS ALIGNMENT</b>		
Do the goals and objectives of the Proposal help to achieve the goals and objectives of the NCRP and the NCRP RFFC grant?	1	0-10
<b>STRATEGIES &amp; BENEFITS</b>		
Does the project implement effective strategies?	2	(0 – 10 X 2)
Does the project provide multiple benefits of significant magnitude?		
<b>PROJECT NEED</b>		
Is the need for the project clearly supported?	2	(0 – 10 X 2)
Does the proposal demonstrate that the project is needed and important to the local community and region?		
<b>PROJECT DAC STATUS</b>		
Is the project is located in and substantially benefitting an economically disadvantaged community?	2	(0 – 10 X 2)
Is the project is located in and substantially benefitting a severely disadvantaged community?		
<b>TOTAL SCORE</b>		0 – 100

## **F. ON-GOING PROJECT INCLUSION PROCESS INTO THE NCRP PLAN, updated 2019**

Increasingly, funding opportunities for project implementation require or give preference to projects that are included in an Integrated Regional Water Management Plan (IRWM) Plan. Regardless if projects are being submitted during a regular IRWM project selection cycle or between regular cycles, each project must be first recommended by the TPRC and be approved by the LC. The following process will provide a mechanism for including projects on an on-going basis into the NCRP Plan.

1. Project proponents will complete preliminary project information:
  - Project Name
  - Organization Name, Type & Contact information
  - Project location address
  - Funding Program names
  - Total project cost & Funding request
  - Start/End dates (tentative)
  - Alignment with NCRP Plan Objectives (selection boxes)
  - Project Summary & Goals
  - Project partners
  - Description of benefits (including if/how the project will benefit disadvantaged communities)
  - Project management strategies/ project elements (selection boxes)
2. Project proponent will submit a signed [Memorandum of Mutual Understandings \(MOMU\)](#) if one has not already been submitted.
3. Staff will review the project and follow-up with project proponents regarding any eligibility concerns (Urban Water Management Plan, Agricultural Water Management, Surface Water Diverter, Groundwater Management Plan, CASGEM/SGMA compliance, proponent type)
4. Staff will submit the project to the NCRP Technical Peer Review Committee (TPRC) for 30 days of TPRC review.
5. The TPRC will review eligible projects to ensure alignment with the NCRP Goals and Objectives and for technical comment.
6. Should the TPRC identify that the project is in alignment, the TPRC will recommend the project be provided to the LC for approval at a NCRP Quarterly Meeting for review and comment. If the timing of the NCRP Quarterly Meeting does not align with the project deadline, it may be submitted by the TPRC to the Executive Committee for approval.
7. Staff will 'Publish' eligible NCRP Projects and project summaries will be included on the website; and staff will report to the LC at a NCRP Quarterly Meeting
8. Additional project information will be required when NCRP funding solicitations and calls for proposals occur; NCRP project proponents will be allowed to edit preliminary project information.
9. NCRP Priority Projects will be selected by the LC. NCRP Priority Project proponents will need to adopt the NCRP Plan when completed per the IRWM Guidelines.

## **G. NCRP POLICY ON EXTERNAL PLAN INTEGRATION, 2019**

The NCRP engages in multi-objective integrated planning to achieve its regional goals and to guide local project implementation. The NCRP regularly reviews local, regional, state and federal planning documents, and where relevant, integrates or references data and information from these plans into updated NCRP plans as updated. NCRP data integration from local and statewide plans may include local Tribal, RCD or watershed plans, reports from business or academic partners, State plans focused on watershed and community health, sustainable groundwater management, and data and planning related to climate change. The NCRP has a history of synchronizing statewide planning priorities with local planning efforts, including Integrated Coastal Watershed Management Plans and Storm Water Resource Management Plans. Occasionally, the NCRP will be requested to fully integrate or ratify the recommendations from other planning processes, or to lend support to outreach and stakeholder engagement for planning processes not initiated by the NCRP. For the purposes of this policy discussion, plans that are not commissioned or executed by the NCRP will be called External Plans. The following section outlines the NCRP policy and process for addressing External Plans.

The NCRP process to a) incorporate or integrate External Plan recommendations, b) be referenced as supporting an External Plan – in part or in full, or c) engage with another planning process, is outlined below. When any variation on items a-c (above) are requested, NCRP staff will initiate the following:

1. NCRP staff will work with External Plan staff or plan proponents to determine the purpose of the External Plan, its potential relevance to the NCRP planning process, and alignment with NCRP goals, objectives, technical review and decision-making processes, and an approach to NCRP staff support, and stakeholder outreach and engagement.
2. The TPRC will be notified of the staff recommendations, and a 30-day comment period will be initiated for the TPRC to review, confirm alignment with the NCRP Goals and Objectives, and for their technical comment. Before the conclusion of the comment period, the TPRC Co-chairs will coordinate with NCRP staff to provide the TPRC with the opportunity to meet in person or by phone to discuss the merits of the proposal.
3. NCRP staff will then bring the request and a staff recommendation to the NCRP Executive Committee for consideration. The Executive Committee will determine if the proposal should be brought forward during a regular quarterly meeting cycle, or if the proposal should be expedited between these cycles. Based on the time required for action the Executive Committee will also determine if the full LC or the Executive Committee will make the final decision.
4. Any Local Plan project proponents seeking funding that requires project inclusion into an IRWM Plan will follow the steps outlined in the On-Going Project Inclusion Process into the NCRP Plan found in the NCRP Handbook.

## **H. NCRP PLAN & STORM WATER RESOURCE PLAN INTEGRATION PROCESS, 2018**

The development of Storm Water Management Plans satisfies the requirements of Senate Bill 985 and State Water Board SWRP Guidelines to establish eligibility for local agencies and organizations to receive future State

Storm Water Grant implementation funds. The purpose of a SWRP is to integrate storm water management with other basic aspects of aquatic resource protection and overall water management including flood control, water supply, and habitat conservation.

The following process was approved by the LC on January 20, 2018 to incorporate a SWRP into the NCRP Integrated Regional Water Management (IRWM) Plan.

1. The SWRP plan will include a summary of the NCRP Plan under the Existing Plans section.<sup>2</sup>
2. The SWRP Plan, Implementation Strategy and Scheduling of Projects section will include a discussion on how the SWRP will be incorporated into the NCRP Plan per the following steps.
  - The Public Draft SWRP will be provided to the NCRP Technical Peer Review Committee (TPRC) for review to ensure alignment with the NCRP Goals and Objectives and for technical comment. The comment period will be 30 calendar days.
  - The Public Draft SWRP will be presented to the NCRP Leadership Council (LC) at a NCRP Quarterly Meeting for review and comment. If timing of the NCRP Quarterly Meetings does not align with the SWRP finalization, the SWRP may be submitted to the LC via email for review and comment.
  - Any TPRC or LC commentary will be considered and addressed prior to finalizing the SWRP with a “response to comments” memo.
  - At a NCRP Quarterly Meeting, a copy of the Final SWRP and “response to comments” memo will be presented to the NCRP LC for the final decision vote. If timing of the NCRP Quarterly Meetings does not align with the SWRP finalization, the SWRP may be submitted to the LC via email for consideration at the next NCRP Quarterly Meeting.<sup>3</sup>
  - SWRP project proponents seeking funding that requires project inclusion into an IRWM Plan will follow the steps outlined in the On-Going Project Inclusion Process into the NCRP Plan.

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<sup>2</sup> An example description: *The North Coast Resource Partnership (NCRP) Integrated Regional Water Management Plan (NCRP Plan) provides a centralized and collaborative framework for addressing local, regional, and statewide water resource priorities. The NCRP Plan emphasizes the creation of a sustainable environmental and socio-economic framework for the North Coast, by engaging in integrated planning for water infrastructure and natural resources. Planning and project focus areas include the recovery of salmonid populations, enhancement of the beneficial uses of water, support for energy independence, climate adaptation, local autonomy and intra-regional cooperation. The NCRP Plan focuses on areas of common interest and concern to North Coast stakeholders and on attracting funding to the North Coast Region, and recognizes unique local solutions in different parts of the Region. The NCRP is comprised of the seven North Coast counties and Tribes within the NCRWQCB watershed boundary. The NCRP Plan is supported by over 100 agencies, special districts, Tribal organizations, non-governmental organizations, watershed groups, and other stakeholders.*

<sup>3</sup> The SWRP Guidelines note that for the purposes of receiving project funding, submittal of the SWRP to the IRWM group (for further incorporation into the existing IRWM plan) fulfils the requirement for “incorporation”.

## **I. NCRP PROCESS FOR EVALUATION OF FUNDING & LEGISLATIVE OPPORTUNITIES, 2020**

The NCRP has been very successful in pursuing funding and influencing legislation to achieve the goals and objectives approved by the LC. Typically, NCRP staff appraises the LC and TPRC of funding and legislative opportunities at the NCRP quarterly meetings, and makes staff recommendations to the LC related to these opportunities, whereby the LC provide direction to staff and the Executive Committee regarding any approved actions on these opportunities. Formal authorization to accept a grant agreement is typically agendaized at a NCRP quarterly meeting, and requires the approval of the LC as well as the formal authorization of the Humboldt County Board of Supervisors, acting as the NCRP fiscal and contracts sponsor.

There are times when funding or legislative opportunities have a rapid turnaround, and in these cases the Executive Committee is authorized to direct and provide guidance to staff in order for the NCRP to pursue these opportunities. Actions that may be taken between quarterly meetings by the NCRP staff with guidance and review from the NCRP Executive Committee include:

- 1) Writing letters related to legislation or funding opportunities that are in support of NCRP Goals and Objectives and aligned with NCRP policies and previous LC direction.
- 2) Evaluating funding or legislative opportunities that are aligned with NCRP goals, objectives and policies, including attending meetings, engaging in discussions, and drafting preliminary concepts for legislator, agency or funder review.
- 3) Prior to substantively proceeding on any funding or legislative opportunity, NCRP staff will receive approval from the Co-Chairs at a minimum, and will request approval from the full Executive Committee. Where relevant, TPRC co-chairs will be consulted and engaged. A decision to formally submit a grant application may be authorized by the Executive Committee. In the absence of the full Executive Committee, the Co-chairs may authorize this action.
- 4) For grants or funding under \$10,000 that are in alignment with previous LC direction, NCRP staff may independently pursue these opportunities provided that Humboldt County is willing to take on the administration of the funding. These funds may be used only for logistical support for stakeholder outreach (e.g., workshops, meetings, handouts) and not for planning or project implementation.
- 5) NCRP meeting materials will include a summary of any actions taken by the Executive Committee and/or staff related to funding or legislative opportunities.
- 6) A decision to accept grant funding would be voted on by the full LC and approved by Humboldt County Board of Supervisors, acting as fiscal and contract sponsor for the NCRP.
- 7) Any funding request would honor the LC approved approach to local autonomy – allowing Tribes or counties to opt out of any element of the funding request in which they do not wish to participate.

- 8) Funding requests or legislative input will predominantly focus on NCRP project implementation, but may also include stakeholder outreach and coordination, technical support for project proponents, data, analysis and planning, or enhanced funding for economically disadvantaged communities.
- 9) The LC may choose to form an Ad Hoc committee focused on funding and/or legislative opportunities – either for specific funding and/or legislative opportunities, or in service of developing more general funding and legislative strategies. An ad hoc committee will be created as needed, serve for a specified period of time, and be disbanded when no longer required. The ad hoc committee is intended to advise NCRP staff and make recommendations to the LC, and may be comprised of LC and TPRC members appointed by the LC.
- 10) Refinements to this approach may be added at each NCRP quarterly meeting, and refined LC direction may apply generally or to a specific legislative or funding opportunity.

## **J. SUB-GRANTEE AGREEMENT COMPLIANCE POLICY, 2021**

The County of Humboldt (COUNTY), in its role as the Regional Grant Administrator on behalf of the North Coast Resource Partnership (NCRP), aims to create an environment in which each Sub-Grantee can be successful. The COUNTY intends to actively assist Sub-Grantees in understanding and meeting the grant agreement requirements. However, it is the responsibility of the Sub-Grantee to comply with grant agreement terms and conditions, NCRP policies, and applicable laws and regulations. When errors or delays arise, the COUNTY will work with the Sub-Grantee to try to find solutions before they become compliance issues. However, when sufficient corrective actions are not taken by a Sub-Grantee to resolve compliance issues, the COUNTY will initiate the following procedures.

### **Failure to Execute the Sub-Grantee Agreement**

The Project Sponsor is required to sign and return the Sub-Grantee agreement, so that it may be fully executed, within the prescribed amount of time depending on the grant program. The prescribed amount of time will be specified when the Sub-Grantee agreement is provided to the Project Sponsor.

- If the Sub-Grantee is unable to sign the agreement within the prescribed amount of time, the submittal of a time extension request is required. In order to be approved, a written request shall explain the reason the extension is necessary and provide a proposed timeline, stating when the signed agreement will be submitted to the COUNTY. Approval of the extension request will be at the discretion of the COUNTY grant manager.
- If the Sub-Grantee fails to submit the signed Sub-Grantee Agreement or an acceptable extension request within the prescribed amount of time, COUNTY staff may recommend that the NCRP Leadership Council (LC) withdraw the project funding offer and initiate the process of reallocating the funds to a different project, per the NCRP Policy, *Project Funding Reallocation Process*.

## Other Significant Compliance Issues

Compliance with Sub-Grantee Agreement terms and conditions, NCRP policies, and applicable laws and regulations is a mandatory requirement to maintain good standing with grant program. Common non-compliance circumstances include the following:

- Repeated failure to follow required administrative procedures and requirements after multiple reminders, such as:
  - Late invoice and report submittals
  - Insufficient quality and completeness of forms and reports
  - Incorrect or altered forms
  - Inadequate communication to remediate errors, delaying the payment process
- Repeated lack of responsiveness to communications regarding grant compliance
- Failure to submit signed grant agreement amendments within the prescribed amount of time
- Noncompliance with state and local permits
- Noncompliance with grantor contract requirements

## Procedures to Remediate Significant Compliance Issues:

1. When COUNTY staff determines that there are significant compliance issues, the Sub-Grantee will be notified via email that they are out of compliance and a corrective action is required within 10 calendar days.
  - a. If corrective action is not taken and communicated to the COUNTY within 10 days, the Sub-Grantee shall submit a written request for a time extension to come into compliance, with an explanation for why an extension is warranted and a schedule for coming into compliance.
  - b. **Mandatory Compliance Refresher Training:**

The COUNTY will hold a conference call or personal meeting with the Sub-Grantee to review the applicable procedures and requirements of the agreement.

A follow-up letter will be sent to the Sub-Grantee identifying the issues discussed during the refresher training. The letter shall be signed by the Sub-Grantee and returned to the COUNTY, acknowledging an understanding of and commitment to comply with the terms of the grant agreement.
2. **Formal Noncompliance Letter:**

If the Sub-Grantee still fails to correct the issue within 10 days, the COUNTY will send a Noncompliance Letter to the Project Manager, the Project's Agency/Organization Director, and copied to the NCRP Executive Committee Members. The letter will reference the compliance issue, prior attempts from the COUNTY to attain compliance, and the suggested actions to bring the Sub-Grantee back into compliance within 10 days.
3. **Conference Call/Meeting:**

The Non-Compliance Letter will suggest a conference call or meeting to discuss the compliance issues and corrective action required. The call or meeting is an opportunity for the Sub-Grantee to present a corrective action plan that can be agreed upon by the Sub-Grantee and the COUNTY to resolve the compliance issues.

4. Termination of Agreement:

If the compliance issue remains uncorrected after the deadline indicated in the letter and there continues to be no agreed upon plan of action as a result of the meeting, COUNTY staff may recommend that the NCRP Leadership Council authorize termination of the Sub-Grantee agreement and, as applicable, initiate the reallocation of funds, per the NCRP Policy, *Project Funding Reallocation Process*.

The Sub-Grantee will be added to a list of entities that failed to comply with the grant agreement requirements, which will be provided to the Technical Peer Review Committee as a reference at future project review meetings for funding opportunities.