

Regional Water Quality Control Board  
North Coast Region

Executive Officer's Summary Report  
October 7, 2022  
Regional Water Board Office  
Santa Rosa, California

ITEM: 5

SUBJECT: 319h Nonpoint Source Grants Program: Solicitation Overview and Project Cultivation (*Carrieann Lopez*)

BOARD ACTION: This is an informational item only. No action will be taken by the Regional Water Board.

BACKGROUND: North Coast Regional Water Board staff administer the Clean Water Act Section 319(h) Nonpoint Source Grant Program, which funds projects that reduce nonpoint source pollution through source control and restoration. The State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board) receives an annual grant from the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) through Section 319(h) of the Federal Clean Water Act. Approximately \$4 million is received each year and is allocated to grant projects that address nonpoint sources (NPS) of pollution throughout the State of California. The grant money primarily funds the construction and implementation of on-the-ground management practices to address water quality problems resulting from nonpoint source pollution in Clean Water Act Section 303(d) Listed waters of the state (i.e. impaired waters). However, limited funding is also available for NPS planning projects, post-fire recovery projects, and the protection of high-quality waters.

DISCUSSION: Application information and eligibility requirements for Section 319(h) grant funds are laid out each year in the *NPS Grant Program Guidelines*. To be eligible for Section 319(h) funds, an entity must be a nonprofit organization, tribe, public college, or federal, state, or local agency. Eligible grant projects must be within areas identified as a "NPS Grant Program Preference" by each Regional Water Board. Projects must implement an adopted, or nearly adopted, total maximum daily load (TMDL) and/or watershed-based plan, which includes the 9-key elements of a watershed plan as defined by USEPA.

Solicitation for project proposals is released by the State Water Board in September of each year. Proposals are due in the Financial Assistance Application Submittal Tool (FAAST) database in mid- December and the list of selected projects is generally available in April of the year following solicitation.

Over the last ten years, over \$16.1 million have gone into nonpoint source grant projects in the North Coast Region, including \$4.5 million in current, active grants. A summary of the current grants is provided in Attachment 1.

These grants have been instrumental in addressing nonpoint sources of pollution, including projects designed for reducing sediment discharges to impaired salmonid

rivers and creeks by fixing roads, stream bank erosion, and other sources. NPS grants have improved stream temperatures by funding riparian planting, riparian fencing that protects riparian vegetation, and irrigation improvements (water conservation) to keep more cold water in rivers.

As part of the evolution of our region's 319(h) NPS grants program, staff will be conducting routine outreach efforts to cultivate NPS projects that address the water quality improvement needs of the region. Further, staff will be assisting grant applicants to build their understanding of the 319(h) program and expand their capacity as project applicants and implementers. Associated with this effort, staff have created a "Water Quality Improvement Projects and Funding Catalog". This catalog will be used internally by staff to house ideas for future restoration projects, unfunded project proposals, and projects that don't qualify for NPS funds and need another source of funding. The goal will be to match projects housed in the catalog with funding sources as they are identified or become available (e.g., Supplemental Environmental Project funds). Staff from multiple point source and NPS programs will be using and contributing to the catalog with the hope of optimizing our efforts at water quality improvement on a watershed by watershed basis.

RECOMMENDATION: N/A This is an information item only.

SUPPORTING  
DOCUMENTS:

1. Current 319 Nonpoint Source Grants in North Coast Region
2. [NPS Pollution Control Program – Grants & Funding Webpage](#)
3. [2022 Nonpoint Source Grant Program Guidelines](#) (Provided as an example of last year's guidelines)
4. [Handbook for Developing Watershed Plans to Restore and Protect Our Waters](#) (Includes discussion of the Nine Key Elements)