



Humboldt BAYKEEPER  
Klamath RIVERKEEPER  
Russian RIVERKEEPER  
San Francisco BAYKEEPER  
Monterey COASTKEEPER  
San Luis Obispo COASTKEEPER  
Santa Barbara CHANNELKEEPER  
Ventura COASTKEEPER  
Los Angeles WATERKEEPER  
Orange County COASTKEEPER  
Inland Empire WATERKEEPER  
San Diego COASTKEEPER



## OPC Proposition 1 Funding Scoping

### I. Proactively Facilitate Integrated Projects and Funding Decisions with Other Agencies.

Proposition 1 will provide funding to support projects with ocean and watershed protection and restoration components across multiple agencies. A unified approach across agencies for project funding and monitoring requirements, and inter-agency coordination will ensure that projects meet equal standards of accountability in achieving multiple benefits and ocean and watershed protection outcomes.

**RECOMMENDATION:** OPC should facilitate inter-agency coordination by:

- Developing an integration panel with other agencies to coordinate funding decisions, establish shared or jointly funded efforts and facilitate joint investment in the best multi-benefit projects.
- Issuing joint proposal solicitations or developing a collective agreement on funding projects in specific geographic areas or watersheds to prioritize certain types of projects.
- Including a check box or field in the OPC's Proposition 1 applications so applicants can indicate the availability of additional Proposition 1 funding from other agencies, facilitating joint proposal considerations.

### II. Prioritize and Solicit Multi-Benefit Projects.

Even with a large amount of funding becoming available, California's ocean health needs far exceed available resources. Projects that achieve multiple benefits, such as endangered species protection, habitat restoration, climate change resiliency, land acquisition and preservation of open space, flood management, and water quality protection should be prioritized for Proposition 1 funding to achieve the best possible outcomes for water quality, ecosystems, and all Californians.

The development of high quality, multi-benefit projects is challenging and time-consuming due to the number of stakeholders necessary for a successful integrated planning process. Furthermore, designing projects to advance measureable criteria, particularly ecological and social criteria linked to benefits for sensitive species and/or disadvantaged communities respectively, requires a greater investment in the planning process. In contrast to water and flood management agencies that can fund planning processes to advance their objectives, disadvantaged communities, NGOs, and fishery agencies often lack to the resources to plan multi-benefit projects, resulting in projects that too often fail to benefit disadvantaged communities and sensitive species.

**RECOMMENDATION:** OPC should further prioritize and encourage multi-benefit projects by:

- Including multi-benefit criteria in the full Proposal's evaluation guidelines. One way to better achieve this is for the draft Guidelines to score the extent to which full Proposals provide "multiple benefits."
- Increasing the value of the "removes or mitigates multiple stressors from the ocean and near coastal environment" criterion in the full Proposal evaluation.
- Offering planning and technical assistance and separate planning grants to advance multi-benefit watershed and urban river enhancement projects that will provide benefits to disadvantaged communities.

### **III. Identify Project Types That Meet Priorities I and II Above.**

We urge OPC to identify and strategically focus on types of projects that facilitate inter-agency coordination and joint funding, achieve multiple benefits, have documented successes from previous public funding efforts, and reflect OPC priorities. Examples include projects that improve coastal water quality, improve bay and estuary climate change resiliency, restore coastal wetlands, or yield benefits for fish passage and flow. Detailed below are each of the four key types of project:

#### **1. Projects that improve water quality in MPAs**

Agencies: OPC, SWRCB, DFW

Multiple benefits: water quality enhancement, restoration of beneficial uses, climate change resiliency, bolster MPAs. Proposition 1 funds can create multiplier effects by building upon and leveraging the already significant investments the state has made in marine managed areas, particularly in Areas of Special Biological Significance (ASBS) and Marine Protected Areas (MPAs).

SUPPORT: Allocation of bonus points for projects that advance the management of individual marine managed areas or the statewide protected area network.

#### **2. Habitat restoration projects that make bays, wetlands, and estuaries more resilient to sea level rise.**

Agencies: OPC, SWRCB, DFW, Coastal Conservancy

Multiple benefits: flood protection and mitigation, protect and restore ecosystems and species, bolster state MPA network through protection of nursery habitats, water quality enhancement, resiliency to sea level rise and other climate change impacts

SUPPORT: Prioritization of habitat restoration projects that provide multiple benefits, including benefitting disadvantaged communities.

#### **3. Coastal water quality and coastal erosion mitigation projects that target the pollution hotspots that exacerbate ocean acidification and hypoxia.**

Agencies: OPC, SWRCB, DFW, Coastal Conservancy, Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy

Multiple benefits: Flood control and protection via stormwater surge prevention and coastal buffer zones; ecosystem, water quality and carbon sequestration benefits in restoring intact wetlands functions; reducing the risk of coastal erosion and the loss of public access by reducing nutrient and sediment loading of water.

SUPPORT: Prioritize shoreline projects that seek a “living shoreline” approach.

#### **4. Projects that benefit fish passage and flows.**

Agencies: OPC, SWRCB, DFW, Coastal Conservancy, Wildlife Conservation Board, local Conservancies depending on project scope and location (i.e. San Diego River Conservancy)

Multiple benefits: facilitate natural sediment flows to make shorelines more resilient to sea level rise and coastal change, water quality enhancement, disadvantaged communities, protect and restore ecosystems and species, bolster MPAs.

SUPPORT: Projects that improve connectivity within aquatic ecosystems by removing barriers, including road and stream crossings, irrigation diversions, and dams.