How to write a successful Tribal 319 competitive grant proposal

Tribal Land Environmental Forum

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BryAnna Vaughan, Bishop Water Quality Program Coordinator
Overview

• The Request for Proposals (RFP)
  – What is EPA looking for?

• Competitive 319 grants – a few insights from recent years

• Best Practices
  – Before preparing a proposal
  – Writing a grant proposal
Who can apply?

- All tribes eligible to receive 319 grant funds
- Tribes may apply for both base & competitive 319 funds in the same year

Proposed projects:
- Should primarily focus on BMP implementation
- May include watershed plan development, WQ monitoring, etc.
- Should demonstrate a Watershed Approach
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ranking Criterion</th>
<th>Point Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Subcategories of NPS pollution</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Water quality problems/threats</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Project goals and objectives; work plan components; specific NPS BMPs and</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>eligible activities; project location</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Link between work plan components and NPS categories; water quality benefits</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Watershed Approach</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. Describing and tracking outputs/outcomes; past performance</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g. Budget</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h. Milestone Schedule</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i. Roles &amp; Responsibilities</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
On average, over the last four years of competitive 319 grant cycles...

- $2.7M was available each year. Project cap of $100K.
- Each year EPA received 44 proposals, 29 of which were selected for award.
- Each year EPA conducted 7 debriefings.
- Successful applicants most frequently addressed NPS from agriculture, hydro/habitat modification, and forestry. (note: EPA does not give scoring preference to certain types)
On average, over the last four years of competitive 319 grant cycles…

• Applicants consistently struggled most with the following evaluation criteria:
  – Describing **how the proposed work will address the NPS pollution sources** and describing **expected water quality benefits** (criterion d)
  – Describing how the proposal fits into the **Watershed Context** (criterion e)
  – Developing a **detailed budget** that links to each work plan task (criterion g)
Ranking Criterion (d)

Link between work plan components and NPS pollution subcategories; Water quality benefits (10 points total)

- How proposed work will address NPS pollution subcategories contributing to problem/threat (5 points)
- Water quality benefits that will be achieved (may included quantitative or narrative descriptions) (5 points)
Criterion D. Link between work plan components and NPS pollution subcategories; Water quality benefits

**Water Quality Benefits**
As climate change progresses the [ ] watershed can expect warmer, milder winters and hotter, drier summers, resulting in lower summer base flows and higher water temperatures.

Construction of beaver dam analogues will cause water to back up and pool behind the dam, helping to slow water, encouraging channel aggradation, especially during high flow events. In addition, decreasing velocity will increase the holding time of the water, resulting in groundwater recharge and raising the water table. A higher water table will increase summer baseflows, as well as increase surface-groundwater interaction, thus decreasing summer water temperatures. Slowing the water and increasing retention time will also help to reduce suspended sediments and nutrients (Pollock, Lewallen, Woodruff, Jordan, & Castro, 2015).

Pools resulting from the dams will also create complex aquatic and terrestrial habitat. Currently, the channelized stream is made up mostly of riffle/run complexes with very few pools. The addition of pools will create necessary habitat for macroinvertebrates and fish. The dam itself will also provide cover and instream complexity for fish, particularly ESA listed steelhead.

The backup of water caused by the dams will force the water to spread out, reconnecting riparian wetlands to the stream channel, and create pristine habitat to encourage local beaver populations to expand their range. The restored riparian habitat also increases habitat diversity for plants and other wildlife.
Criterion D. Link between work plan components and NPS pollution subcategories; Water quality benefits

Water Quality Benefits
Removing stock access to riparian areas and stabilizing streambanks will reduce pollutant loads resulting in a decrease in the volume of previously eroding streambank material that would have been delivered during high streamflow events. Potential sediment delivery will return to a natural background condition once the streambanks re-establish and bacteria and nutrients from feces will no longer be directly deposited into the stream and wetland.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project Name, and Location</th>
<th>Calculation/Estimation Method</th>
<th>Annual Load Reductions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>headwaters</td>
<td>Direct Volume Calculation</td>
<td>Sediment = 66.6 tons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase I restoration project</td>
<td></td>
<td>Nitrogen = 213.2 lbs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Phosphorus = 106.6 lbs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Reviewer Notes:

- Project addresses pollutant parameters associated with water quality problem.
- Estimates of pollutant load reductions.
- Applicant describes water quality benefits: pollutant reductions, aquatic habitat improvement.
Ranking Criterion (e)

*Watershed Approach* (10 points total)

- Demonstrate how a watershed-based approach was adopted in developing proposed project (i.e., why is this proposed work a priority in the watershed?) (5 points)
- Demonstrate how project can be linked to or expanded upon in future. (5 points)
Watershed Approach
Criterion E: Watershed Approach

Primarily, the project was chosen because there is a clear degradation of water quality between the upstream monitoring site [X1] and the downstream monitoring site [X2]. In order to best address this water quality issue, the following factors were considered:

Location
• Greatest amount of known erosion located within stream reach.
• Project will likely not require heavy machinery, is accessible by foot.
• Abundance of downed trees in vicinity, to be used for project.

Sequencing, collaboration, and past planning:
• Project part of larger cumulative effort, incorporates past planning efforts by partners (NRCS).
• Timing of implementation coincides with three nearby restoration projects.
Reviewer Notes:
• Applicant identifies as high priority project based on monitoring data, other ongoing efforts in watershed.
• Proposed work based on past planning.
• Opportunity to coordinate with other ongoing projects for cumulative benefit.
Best Practices: Before preparing a proposal

• Establish the “Big Picture”
  – What are your program goals?
  – What specific project(s) will you implement to achieve those goals?

• Talk to partners to ID joint priorities

• NPS pollution is complicated, may take multiple phases of projects to address. It’s OK to state this in proposals.
Best Practices: Proposal Writing

• Be sure the funding opportunity is the right one for your needs
• Tie the work back to the “Big Picture”
• Don’t get creative in your proposal format – stick to the RFP criteria
• Describe and show (photos, maps, graphs) the problem & proposed work
• Stick to the page limit
• Ask for a debriefing, regardless of outcome
Writing a Successful 319 Competitive Grant Proposal

TIPS FROM A TRIBAL PERSPECTIVE

BryAnna Vaughan
Water Quality Program Coordinator
A LITTLE BIT ABOUT THE BISHOP PAIUTE TRIBE

- Fifth largest tribe in California, with approximately 2,000 enrolled members
- Federally recognized, sovereign tribal nation
- The Bishop Paiute Reservation includes 875 acres with both forks of Bishop Creek running from the headwaters in the Eastern Sierra to the Owens River.
- Bishop Creek is the largest tributary to the Owens River, a main source of water imported to Los Angeles.
- Agriculture on the Rez includes grazing cattle, equines, crop production
- Water Quality Standards
- Nonpoint Source Management Plan
- Watershed Management Plan
Just a hop, skip, and a jump...
Planning for a CWA 319 Competitive Grant Proposal

- Make sure your tribe meets the eligibility requirements
- Review EPA’s Tribal 319 Grant Program [https://www.epa.gov/nps/tribal-319-grant-program](https://www.epa.gov/nps/tribal-319-grant-program)
- Know dates for important EPA deadlines! Make your own deadlines based on this information.
- Make time for the EPA information webinar session – what’s new?
- Review EPA’s frequently asked questions
- Examine the Requests for Applications – over and over and over
- Get necessary approval to apply from your tribe – resolution?
- Communicate with your Grants.gov AOR
  - DUNS #
  - SAM Registration
  - Tax ID
  - Workspace
- Remember, it’s not what you know, it’s who you know – find a friend!
Organize Your Nonpoint Source Ideas

- What are your objectives?
  - Be specific
  - Are they measurable?
  - Are they achievable?
  - Are they result-oriented?
  - Can they be completed within the allowable project period?
Prioritize and Align Your Objectives

- Prioritize your NPS Objectives by
  - Achieve better water quality
  - Provide the greatest benefits to the community and water quality uses
  - Attain the desired results in less time
  - Build increased capacity for the Tribe’s related programs
  - Do you have the capacity to complete the objectives (e.g. staff, tools)?
  - Must, should, and could – essential, would be cool, could be postponed

- Align your NPS Objectives with EPA’s Nonpoint Source Program
  - Are they eligible under this program (e.g. monitoring)?
  - How do your objective align with EPA’s 319 Program objectives?
Developing A Grant Proposal

- Parts of the grant
  - Project Workplan
  - Project Budget
  - Project Narrative
    - Relevant maps
    - Water quality data in easy to decipher graphs/illustrations
  - Federal Forms…
- Make sure to review the grant requirements for each section!!!
## Project Workplan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Work Plan Goals with Tasks and Environmental Results</th>
<th>Dates Start - End</th>
<th>Environmental Outputs (Deliverables)</th>
<th>Responsible Staff &amp; Work Years</th>
<th>Estimated Cost</th>
<th>Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **GOAL:** Review and update watershed-based plan for the Bishop Creek watershed  
Task 1 (a): Review and update Watershed-Based Plan for Bishop Creek.  
Task 1 (b): Continue identifying and building partnerships with stakeholders in the Bishop Creek watershed and encouraging their participation.  
Task 1 (c): Include characterization updates to the Bishop Creek watershed (drainage area 76,762 acres)  
Task 1 (d): Continue prioritization of NPS projects for Bishop Creek watershed (drainage area 76,762 acres)  
Task 1 (e): Update water quality status, NPS threats, goals and solutions | 10/18 – 4/19, 10/18 – 9/19, 10/18 – 9/19, 3/19 – 8/19, 4/19 – 8/19 | Include in quarterly reports:  
- Summary of stakeholders in the Bishop Creek watershed  
- Summaries of partnership and collaboration efforts. | WQC, WQI, ED | 014, 000, 012 | Task 1(a) $4,457 (P, S)  
Task 1 (b) $1,470 (P, S)  
Task 1 (c) $2,000 (P, S)  
Task 1 (d) $1,750 (P, S)  
Task 1 (e) $1,750 (P, S)  
Subtotal: $9,045 |

**ENVIRONMENTAL OUTCOME:**  
- Ensure the information contained in the Watershed-Based Plan for Bishop Creek is up to date and accurate, and project priorities are correct.  
- Facilitate communication and partnerships with watershed stakeholders and encourage sound science for watershed studies while providing means of cost-effective watershed management.  
- Continue to update water quality data and threats in the Bishop Creek watershed as it becomes available.  
- The largest and most threatening NPS pollution sources in Bishop Creek watershed are targeted and addressed in priority NPS projects.  
- An updated Watershed-Based Plan will serve as a resource tool for Bishop Creek stakeholders to address NPS pollution affecting Bishop Creek and protect its high quality of water.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Unit</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>A. PERSONNEL:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1) Water Quality Coordinator:</td>
<td>0.050</td>
<td>24.50</td>
<td>2,548</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5% FTE</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2) Environmental Technician:</td>
<td>0.050</td>
<td>16.00</td>
<td>1,664</td>
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<tr>
<td>5% FTE</td>
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<tr>
<td>3) Environmental Manager</td>
<td>0.025</td>
<td>37.00</td>
<td>1,324</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.5% FTE</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>4) Native Plant Specialist:</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td>16.00</td>
<td>33,280</td>
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<tr>
<td>100% FTE</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>B. FRINGE BENEFITS:</strong></td>
<td>0.30</td>
<td></td>
<td>11,825</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>@30% x Personnel Costs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>C. TRAVEL/TRAINING</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>11,650</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NPS and/or watershed workshop</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>1,250</td>
<td>3,750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Survey/mapping on site training</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>7,900</td>
<td>7,900</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>D. EQUIPMENT ($5,000+)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>7,597</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Handheld GPS unit</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>7,597</td>
<td>7,597</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>E. SUPPLIES (Field &amp; Office)</strong></td>
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<td>52,455</td>
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<tr>
<td>Office consumables</td>
<td>12.00</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>2,280</td>
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<td>Education outreach materials</td>
<td>12.00</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>6,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fencing supplies</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>5,375</td>
<td>5,375</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Erosion control materials</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>1,500</td>
<td>6,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native Plant Nursery supplies</td>
<td>12.00</td>
<td>675</td>
<td>8,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer/Hardware/Software upgrades</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>3,550</td>
<td>14,200</td>
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<tr>
<td>Field/laboratory supplies</td>
<td>12.00</td>
<td>575</td>
<td>6,900</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tractor supplies</td>
<td>12.00</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>3,600</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>F. CONTRACTUAL</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>55,625</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attorney fees for ordinance(s)</td>
<td>15.00</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>1,725</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fencing installation</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>1800</td>
<td>5,400</td>
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<tr>
<td>Backhoe Operator</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>2300</td>
<td>6,900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native Plant Nursery Manager (Part-time, year-round 20 hours per week)</td>
<td>1080.00</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>21,600</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>G. CONSTRUCTION: N/A</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>H. OTHER</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newsletter mailings and misc outreach</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adopt A Creek incentives</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>2,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>I. TOTAL DIRECT COST</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>161,168</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>J. TOTAL INDIRECT COST</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>55,918</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>K. TOTAL PROPOSED PROGRAM COSTS</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>217,086</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Federal Share (95%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>206,232</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tribal Share (5%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>10,854</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sum</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>217,086</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Project Narrative

- Follow the directions of the RFP
- Review the Ranking Criteria
- Review the Ranking Criteria
- Review the Ranking Criteria
- Tell your story
  - Pull on their heartstrings from the first paragraph
  - Get to the point
    - Bullets, tables, graphs...
  - Support your statement of need with data
- Page limit, font size, font style, margins...
Find Your Feedback Friends
Submit the Proposal Early!

Consider technology
Consider those that you are dependent on for the submission – life happens
Questions?

Grant information at: 
www.epa.gov/nps/tribal