2015 LAKE TAHOE LICENSE PLATE PROGRAM GRANT PROCEDURES

Please note, proposals including the implementation of construction projects listed on the TRPA 5-year EIP list will be prioritized this funding round.

1. Authority

Chapter 72 of the Sixty-ninth Legislative Session amended NRS 482 and NRS 321 to establish the Lake Tahoe license plate program. This program is funded by fees collected from individuals who purchase Lake Tahoe license plates. The program receives twenty-five dollars for the initial issuance of the plate and twenty dollars for each renewal. The following language was added to Chapter 321 of NRS:

1. *The account for license plates for the support of the preservation and restoration of the natural environment of the Lake Tahoe Basin is hereby created in the state general fund. The administrator of the division of state lands of the state department of conservation and natural resources shall administer the account.*
2. *The money in the account does not lapse to the state general fund at the end of a fiscal year. The interest and income earned on the money in the account, after deducting any applicable charges, must be credited to the account.*
3. *The money in the account must be used only for the support of programs for the preservation and restoration of the natural environment of the Lake Tahoe Basin and must not be used to replace or supplant funding available from other sources. The administrator may provide grants from the account to other public agencies to carry out the provisions of this section.*

2. Definitions

Committee: Committee means the technical advisory committee established by the Division to perform technical review, and prioritization, of grant applications.

Division: Division means the Division of State Lands of the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources.

Equipment: Items that are not completely consumed during the project and that generally have a useful life of more than one year.

Fund: Fund means the account for license plates for the support of the preservation and restoration of the natural environment of the Lake Tahoe Basin.

Grantee: Recipient of the Lake Tahoe License Plate Grant award.

Program: Program refers to a program, project or activity intended for the preservation and restoration of the natural environment of the Lake Tahoe Basin.

Supplies: Items generally consumed in use or with and anticipated life span of less than one year. Examples could include ice, plastic gloves, slides, buckets, notepads, pens and bags, etc.

3. Grants of Money

The division will award grants of money, from the fund, for the preservation and restoration of the natural environment of the Lake Tahoe Basin. Grants may be used to fund an entire program or a portion thereof. The state land administrator makes all final decisions regarding grant funding. A sample funding agreement has been provided by the Division.

4. Solicitations of Applications

The division will periodically solicit applications for grants of money from the fund. Funds can be provided for programs such as (but not limited to) **implementing projects to improve the environment (ex: water quality improvements, recreation features, etc.), educational programs (see Section 9 for budget limitations), research and monitoring.**

5. Evaluation and Prioritization

a. Each program or project shall be evaluated based on the Environmental Criteria for Grant Awards found in Section 6. In its review, the Division shall use the advice of the technical advisory committee and an independent technical peer review (research and monitoring proposals only). All monitoring and research proposals will be peer reviewed through the Tahoe Science Consortium and using the Technical Review Criteria provided in Attachment A.
b. The committee will rank submitted proposals and identify a preliminary list of projects deemed to be high priority for project funding.
c. Proposals which include the implementation of capital improvement projects which further the attainment of TRPA Environmental Thresholds (e.g. water quality improvement projects, recreation improvements, stream environmental zone restoration, land coverage removal, etc.) will be prioritized this funding round.
d. Past project performance using Lake Tahoe License Plate funds (including adherence to budgets, schedules and quality of work) will be considered as part of final funding recommendations.
e. The state land administrator shall make the final selection considering the preliminary ranking list compiled by the committee.

6. Evaluation Criteria for Grant Awards

The Division shall evaluate each program or project pursuant to the following criteria:

a. The environmental benefit of the program toward preserving and restoring the natural environment of the Lake Tahoe Basin, including whether the program:
   (i) Will contribute to the achievement of environmental thresholds as identified in the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency (TRPA) regional plan; and/or
   (ii) Is listed as a program or project in the "Environmental Improvement Program" of TRPA.
b. The ability to obtain all required local, state and federal permits.
c. The long-term viability of the program or project.
d. The ability of the applicant to maintain the project and the adequacy of the maintenance plan.
e. The cost effectiveness of the program or project.
f. The ability of the applicant to carry out the program in a timely manner;
g. If the applicant is applying to fund a program or project that is a portion of a larger project, the ability of the portion funded with grant money to achieve environmental benefits independently of other components of the larger project.
h. The amount of cooperation and support for the program or project from persons other than the applicant, including, without limitation:
   (i) Federal, state and local governmental agencies;
   (ii) Private landowners; and/or
   (iii) Non-profit organizations

i. The amount of matching contribution provided by the applicant.
j. The comments and technical ratings received through the independent technical review process (research and monitoring proposals only). For proposals which receive a technical peer review and average score of 4 or higher is necessary for the proposal to be considered for funding.
k. The likelihood that resulting information can be used directly to guide future land and resource management.

7. Requirements of the Grantee Upon Awarding of Grant

The grantee and the Division shall enter into an agreement, which shall include, but not be limited, to the following (sample agreement available from the Division):

a. A schedule for disbursement of the grant funds that is tied to deliverables for the completion of the program or project. Please note, it will be required that schedules incorporate progress reports describing the activities undertaken and the accomplishments toward achieving project goals, tasks and targets. Progress reports shall be submitted, at a minimum, quarterly and shall be of sufficient detail to show progress to provide payment of invoices billed quarterly.
b. As applicable, a Draft Final Project Report is required 10 weeks prior to the termination date of the agreement for agency review and comment. Comments shall be provided to the grantee within 4 weeks and the grantee will address and incorporate these comments into the Final Project Report, due no later than 2 weeks prior to the funding agreement termination date. Delays in projects reports will delay the payment of invoices;
c. An agreement to operate and provide maintenance for the project for at least 20 years after the project is completed;
d. If the project involves improvements located on private property, the grantee shall obtain such easements for conservation or other interests in land as are necessary to carry out the project
e. Projects which include monitoring or research elements will be expected to deliver pertinent data gathered on spreadsheets or in similar presentations, and analyses which directly address the environmental resource issue(s) under investigation. Projects which include data collection activities should interpret new information in manners which can be used to guide future land and resource management actions. Those findings should be presented as "lessons learned", directly describing how that new information may be integrated into the management of resources;
f. Acknowledgement that the project will begin within six months of awarding the grant;
g. Acknowledgment that the grant recipient shall be responsible for obtaining all required local, state and federal grants or authorizations necessary for carrying out the project. Grantees should provide at least 6 months in the schedule to obtain permits not previously secured for the project. Agreements will prohibit reimbursement of Lake Tahoe License Plate funds until other funds supporting the complete project are secured by the grantee.
h. Data collection is considered public information and will be provided to the State of Nevada prior to termination of the grant.

8. Match Requirements

a. Nevada State agencies shall not be required to provide matching funds to be eligible for grants under this program.
b. All other grant applicants shall be required to provide a matching contribution to the proposed project of not less than 25 percent of the cost of the project to be eligible for grants under this program.
c. All match dollars expended shall be documented on Division approved outlay reports and include sufficient backup documentation. **Grantees shall use the federally approved rate or provide sufficient backup documentation to proposed indirect costs. An example budget form, including fields for detailing of match dollars, is available from the Division.**

9. Acceptable and Unacceptable Uses of Grant

Acceptable uses of grant money include:

a. All expenses related directly to the program or project, including, without limitation, expenses related to design and construction; and
b. Grant funds may be utilized in **ONE** of the following manners:

   1. For the administrative costs of the program or project, not to exceed five percent (5%) of the grant (if budgets include administrative costs of 5%, staff hours used to administer the grant are intended to be covered by the 5% administrative costs and therefore should not be billed separately); **OR**

   2. For indirect costs associated with project labor. **Grantees shall use the federally approved rate or provide sufficient backup documentation to support proposed indirect costs.**

c. Environmental education/information programs. The maximum amount of funds available each year for environmental education programs shall not exceed $25,000 or 10 percent of the available grant funds available January 15th of each year, whichever is more limiting.
d. Supplies and equipment purchase/rental. For equipment purchases or rentals, as a general rule, the maximum amount available with any grant is 5% of the total project costs up to $5,000. It is expected that the grantee will attempt to rent equipment as a first option. If renting equipment is not reasonable based on cost, availability, quality, etc. then equipment expenditures may be approved in advance of the purchase by the grantor. If purchasing equipment, the grantee should identify in the proposal what equipment is proposed for purchase, how it is directly related to the implementation of the project, and why rental equipment will not be utilized. With all equipment purchases the grantor will have the option to retain the equipment upon project completion. If the equipment is being utilized by more than the project, it is generally expected that the equipment costs will be split amongst the other funding entities. There are no cost limitations for supplies.

   The money in the account must be used only for the support of projects for the preservation and restoration of the natural environment of the Lake Tahoe Basin and must not be used to replace or supplant funding available for other sources. If you have any questions regarding whether particular items are eligible for reimbursement, please contact NDSL for clarification.

Unacceptable uses of the grant money include:

a. Any planning activities which are not directly related to the design and engineering of the project;
b. Paving, unless paving is recommended by the committee to remedy erosion;
c. The acquisition of land, unless such an acquisition is deemed by the state land administrator to be an integral component of the program or project;
d. Any work required by a public agency as mitigation or as a condition of the approval of any other project;
e. Any component of the program or project that is deemed by the state land registrar to not benefit the public;
f. Funds to cover tuition costs, conference costs, publications or training.

Attachment A
Technical Peer Review Criteria and Instructions

Instructions to reviewers:
Please provide a brief written summary of your review findings for each review criterion listed below. Please provide an overall numerical rating of the proposal based on your review. Use the rating definitions below to determine your overall rating. Please do not report numerical ratings with greater than two significant figures. Please provide a brief written justification for your overall rating.

Rating	Definition
5 – 5.9 (Superior)	All aspects of the proposal are clear and well described. All technical review criteria are affirmatively met and there is a high probability of success. No substantive flaws are noted, although some minor errors or omissions may be noted.
4 – 4.9 (Good)	All aspects of the proposal are clear and well described. A majority of the technical review criteria are affirmatively met, although there may be some minor questions related to some aspects of the proposal. Reviewers may identify one substantive flaw, but there is a clear resolution to that flaw. Some minor errors or omissions also may be noted.
3 – 3.9 (Average)	The proposal is sound overall, but some deficiencies are noted. Reviewers may identify up to two substantive critical flaws, and at least half of the technical review criteria are affirmatively met.
2 – 2.9 (Below Average)	The proposal presents a cogent description of the project but serious deficiencies are noted. Reviewers may identify three or more substantive critical flaws, and less than half of the technical review criteria are affirmatively met.
1 – 1.9 (Inferior)	The proposal does not present a cogent description of the project and serious deficiencies are noted. Reviewers may identify three or more substantive critical flaws, and less than half of the technical review criteria are affirmatively met.

Technical Review Criteria:
Goals. Are the goals, objectives, and hypotheses clearly stated and internally consistent? Is the idea timely and important?

Justification. Is the study justified relative to existing knowledge? Is the conceptual basis clearly stated in the proposal and does it explain the underlying basis for the proposed work?

Approach. Is the approach well designed and appropriate for meeting the objectives of the project? Are the results likely to add to the base of knowledge? Is the project likely to generate novel information, methodologies, or approaches?

Feasibility. Is the approach fully documented and technically feasible? Are the underlying assumptions reasonable? What is the likelihood of success? Are the scale, budget, and timeline of the project consistent with the goals and objectives and within the grasp of the authors?

Products. Is the project likely to yield products of value? Are interpretative (or interpretable) outcomes likely from this project? Will the information ultimately be useful to decision makers?

Capabilities. What is the track record of the authors in terms of their past work? Is the project team qualified to efficiently and effectively implement the proposed project? Do they have the infrastructure and other aspects of support necessary to accomplish the project?

Overall Rating. Please provide a numerical score using the rating table and provide a brief justification for your overall rating.