Guidelines for expanded proposals (For those selected at the regional level for further consideration by the National Panel).

Please prepare in Adobe PDF a standard USGS professional proposal with introduction and background, purpose and objective, methods, activity schedule, itemized budget, proposed results, conclusions and products. In addition, provide separate responses to the nine criteria provided below, and approval letters from both the WSC Director and the Park Superintendent addressed to Mark Nilles and Pete Penoyer.

## Project ranking criteria for the national evaluation panel
## USGS National Park Service Water Quality Partnership

1. Problem definition and background information: What exactly is the problem? Why is this project needed? What information do you have that's relevant to the problem? If this is an information-gathering project, what is the information being gathered and what will you be able to do as a result?
2. Significance of the resource or issue to the park: Describe why this is an important issue or resource to the park involved. There should also be direct discussion about how important the resource/issue is to the park relative to other resources/issues that are listed as high priority by the Park. List the priority rating in reference to all other natural resource issues for the Park. For example: "This project is park priority 30, but is priority 2 for park natural resource projects. Also, what process did the Park use to identify this issue/resource as a priority?
3. Severity of resource threat, problem, or need(s): Is there a time-critical or urgent aspect to this project? What causes this to be an urgent need? How imminent is the threat, and what is its extent? What are the consequences of not doing the project now?
4. Technical soundness: What methods and approach will be used to achieve the project objectives? What is the timeframe of the project and its components? Identify which permits will be necessary to complete the work. How will measurements, data, and models be quality assured? Who are key staff and what are their qualifications?
5. Scientific merit: Describe any new, unique, or innovative methods or equipment that will be used or developed to accomplish the objectives of the study. Will the outcome provide new or unique products or information to Park managers and the public?
6. Transferability: How widely will the results, new protocols, or new information be used by others? What are you going to do to get this information to others who can use it? (Multi-park and multi-region projects are addressed in this criterion)
7. Cost-effectiveness: Given the problem statement and proposed methodology, are cost estimates realistic? Have opportunities for collaborations, equipment-sharing, and other shared resources been evaluated?
8. Project support: A detailed description of total project costs, including contributions, is required. Do not include NPS management oversight, supervision, administrative support, and other NPS routine costs that will occur regardless of whether this project is funded. Do not include the cost of NEPA or other compliance actions required for this project when calculating the percent matching contributions.
9. Problem resolution: Describe how the proposed project will resolve the problem, as defined in the proposal. Will the project contribute directly to decisions or actions that will meaningfully resolve a management issue?

The project ranking criteria responses are evaluated by a panel convened to review the project proposals submitted by all the regions to a funding source. Panel members may, for each criterion, score projects from the 1 to 5 level using any whole number in that range. Qualifications for scores of 1, 3, or 5 points for each criterion are listed below. Criterion 8 includes qualifications for scoring at the 1 to 5-point levels.

**Detailed Discussion of Criteria:**

**1. Problem Definition and Background Information: Weighting Factor = 2x**

5 points: The proposal clearly defines the problem that will be addressed by this project. For a management problem, the information base regarding the problem is well described and provides a sound foundation for problem resolution. For a problem involving lack of information, project statement clearly documents why existing information is not adequate and how the information obtained through this project will provide a sound foundation for problem resolution.

3 points: The proposal describes the problem in general terms. T he proposal provides some details about the background of the problem, but there is not enough information available to determine if the proposed study will advance resolution of the problem. The project does not clearly focus on what the real problem is. For a problem involving lack of information, the proposal describes only moderately well what information is needed and how it will be used.

1 point: The problem is poorly defined and/or availability, applicability, or adequacy of the information needed to address the problem is inadequately described.

**2. Significance of the Resource or Issue to the Park: Weighting Factor = 3x**

5 points: High significance - Resource or issue is: 1 ) One of the most significant in the park, defined as unique, unparalleled, unprecedented, unequalled, matchless, singular; 2 ) The only one of its kind (state the source of this determination, and define the scale, such as whether it is unique in the park, region, or nation); 3) The subject of the enabling legislation; 4) Fundamental to this park's ecosystem and purpose (as opposed to basic resources such as air and water that are fundamental to all parks); 5) On federal or state lists as endangered or threatened; 6) covered by laws or statutes that require protection of the resource or other action. To earn a "5" requires that at least four of these criteria be met.

3 points: Moderate significance - Resource or issue is important, but not singularly so for that Park. Project is not the top natural resource priority in the park.

1 point: Resource or issue is only peripherally related to park's purposes, uses, or long-term condition.

**3. Severity of Resource Threat, Problem, or Need(s): Weighting Factor = 3x**

5 points: Delaying the project will result in resource damage that is extensive, persistent, immediate, complex, or likely irreversible. Doing the project now will prevent significantly worse problems later and loss of an important opportunity for partnership and significant cost-sharing or delaying the project will result in a significant hazard to human health or safety .

3 points: Resource threat, problem, or need is urgent. Delay of the project will result in, or continue, resource degradation. A potential public health or safety threat exists.

1 point: Resource threat, problem, or need is potential; or minor; or infrequent; and/or temporary. Immediate action is not necessary to protect resources. Delaying the project will result in, or continue, the potential for resource degradation. Public health/safety is not an issue.

**4. Technical Soundness: Weighting Factor = 3x**

5 points: Objectives, expected outcomes, and products are clearly stated and suited to the technical approach; methodologies, procedures, and proposed actions are technically sound and their applicability is well demonstrated; identifies which permits will be necessary to conduct the work and how all measurements, data, and models will be quality assured; and time frame is reasonable for using the planned approach to accomplish project objectives. Key individuals working on the project have a high level of expertise directly relevant to their roles in the project.

3 points: Objectives, expected outcomes, or products are less than clearly stated but appear related to the technical approach; or methodologies, procedures, and proposed actions have some technical inadequacies or their applicability is not well demonstrated; identifies which permits will be necessary to conduct the work and how all measurements, data, and models will be quality assured; or it is uncertain that project objectives can be accomplished within planned timeframe using the proposed approach. Key individuals working on the project have expertise that is generally relevant to their roles in the project.

1 point: Objectives, expected outcomes, and products are not clearly stated; or methodologies, procedures, and proposed actions are not technically sound or their applicability has not been demonstrated; identifies which permits will be necessary to conduct the work and how all measurements, data, and models will be quality assured; or project cannot be accomplished within proposed time frames. Key individuals working on the project do not clearly have relevant expertise that is necessary to the success of the project.

**5. Scientific Merit: Weighting Factor = 3x**

5 points: The proposed project exhibits superior scientific merit by applying existing or new techniques to study unique and/or complex park problems and provides high-quality information to managers and the public in useful and original products.

3 points: The proposed project exhibits scientific merit by applying existing techniques to address park problems and provides quality information to park managers and the public.

1 point: The proposed project does not exhibit scientific merit, or will provide only basic water resource information to park managers and the public.

**6. Transferability: Weighting Factor = 1x**

5 points: The proposal clearly demonstrates, through specific examples, how protocols or results of the project will contribute to tangible needs of the NPS or other organizations at the national level; and there are expressions of interest in this work by others across the country; and the project approach includes specific measures to make project information and results widely available.

3 points: The protocols or results of the project can contribute to tangible needs at several parks or other organizations within a geographic region; and others have expressed interest in this project; and the project approach includes the intent and ability to make project information, and results available to other units or organizations.

1 point: The project's tangible benefits are limited to the park or the proposal provides no clear plan to actively inform others about project information or results. For example, information may be made available on a very limited basis, where others may or may not see it and/or without consideration for the specific audience that would benefit from the work.

**7. Cost-Effectiveness: Weighting Factor = 2x**

5 points: Alternative ways of doing this project have been researched, and descriptions of alternatives make clear that this is the most cost- effective way of achieving the project benefits. The benefit to the resource, in relation to the cost, is very high. Costs are realistic, well-researched, clearly spelled out in a detailed budget, apportioned for each deliverable/product or result, and supported by examples.

3 points: Costs appear reasonable to achieve the stated objectives, procedures, deliverables, and products or results. The benefit to the resource, in relation to the cost, is moderate; or proposal only generally describes how costs were determined and provides only general supportive data.

1 point: Costs appear disproportionately high or low in relation to the stated project objectives, procedures, deliverables, and products or results; or proposal provides inadequate evidence that costs have been accurately evaluated relative to the benefits.

**8. Project Support: Weighting Factor = 2x**

A detailed description of total project costs, including contributions, is required.

5 points: 70% or more of the project costs are covered by other funding sources.

4 points: 51-69% of project costs are covered by other funding sources.

3 points: 39-50% of project costs are covered by other funding sources.

2 points: 10-38% of project costs are covered by other funding sources.

1 point: Less than 10% of project costs are covered by other funding sources.

**9. Problem Resolution: Weighting Factor = 3x**

5 points: The proposed project implements specific management prescriptions that will result in the final resolution of a natural resource issue or threat; or the project develops the information necessary for implementing management actions that will resolve the issue or threat. For a management problem, no additional actions other than follow-up monitoring are anticipated; or for projects involving lack of information, no additional information is needed or required and the park has specific plans to take action as a result of having this information.

3 points: The proposed project will contribute to management actions towards resolution of the problem, but will the problem will not fully be resolved; or the proposed project will contribute to the future resolution of the problem for example, by clarifying management issues, articulating techniques or procedures, or supporting an interagency or regional strategy. Information gained through this project will help in future resolution of the problem, but the park does not currently have concrete plans to take action to resolve the problem. Additional studies, management actions, and/or planning will be necessary to completely resolve the stated problem.

1 point: The proposed project is only generally related to the development of management actions to resolve a specific problem. The proposed project will contribute basic information about park natural resources.

*Example: Project Support Cost Estimate*

Park In-Kind Support: 1 each GS-401-9 Seasonal Biologist for 14 pay periods = $21,480, 3 each GS-401/486-5 Seasonal Biological/Wildlife Technicians for 12 pay periods = $12,120 (Item Cost: $33,600 = 14% of total project cost)

Donated Supplies: 5 each Insulated chest waders = $220, 400' Goldline rope = $310, 6 each 100' Drift nets = $1,200, Lab supplies = $210, Misc. field supplies = $460 (Item Cost: $2,400 = 2% of total project cost)

Donated Equipment Costs: 2 each Backpack electroshock units = $6,200, 2 each MCT dataloggers = $1,000, 3 each portable radios = $2,600, 1 each AED unit = $2,200 (Item Cost: $12,000 = 5% of total project cost)

Federal Non-NRPP Contributions: NOAA – National Marine Sanctuaries Grant *(Item Cost: $2,400 = 2% of total project cost)*

Volunteer Services and Non-federal Contributions: Diving Equipment and Marketing Association (cash) and California Department of Fish and Game (cash) (Item Cost: $2,400 = 2% of total project cost)

Other Contributions: None

**Project Support Cost Estimate Totals =** *(Item Costs: $52,800 = 25% of total project cost)*