

2017 Nonpoint Source Funding Concept Paper Instructions

Check frequently for updated information on the
[Colorado Nonpoint Source Program Website](#)

In the fall of every year the Water Quality Control Division, Nonpoint Source (NPS) Program sends out a request for applications for NPS funding. Prior to requesting applications, the NPS Program, in collaboration with its NPS Alliance partners, provides an opportunity for project sponsors to solicit feedback about NPS project concepts. The purpose of the feedback is to help project sponsors clearly define their nonpoint source water quality problem or protection opportunity and receive technical advice about their project idea in advance of the application process. While participation in this feedback process is not mandatory, the NPS Program encourages project sponsors to take advantage of this opportunity to make sure project ideas are focused on water quality problems and protection opportunities associated with nonpoint sources of pollution and aligned with NPS Program priorities.

For those project sponsors interested in receiving feedback on a NPS project idea, the NPS Program requests submittal of a Concept Paper. **The Concept Paper submittal deadline is September 14, 2016 and feedback on the ideas shared through Concept Papers will be provided on September 21, 2016 during a telephone conference in the morning (more details to follow).** The instructions for development of a concept paper not to exceed four pages in length are provided below.

NPS Project Eligibility Requirements:

The NPS Program will be looking for projects that meet the following eligibility requirements when it requests applications this fall. Your project idea must meet these eligibility requirements in order to submit a Concept Paper.

As described in the 2012 Nonpoint Source Program Management Plan which can be found at <https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/cdphe/2012-nonpoint-source-management-plan>, the NPS Program is looking for projects that will help achieve its two overarching objectives: restore waterbodies not meeting water quality standards by addressing nonpoint source water quality impacts; and protect existing water quality from future nonpoint source pollution. Project types eligible for funding are:

- Watershed implementation projects that restore nonpoint source impaired waters and are identified in EPA Nine Elements of a Watershed-based Plan. These projects will construct on-the-ground best management practices (BMPs)

to address nonpoint source impairments caused by selenium, pathogens or nutrient-related exceedances and must include outreach and education about the BMPs being implemented.

- Watershed-based plan projects that develop or update EPA nine element watershed plans for watersheds that include waterbodies not meeting water quality standards due to any nonpoint source of pollution.
- Limited funds are also available for on-the-ground BMP implementation or watershed-based plan development that protect water quality in either good water quality watersheds or watersheds that show a declining trend in water quality but are still meeting water quality standards.

In addition to the project type requirements defined above, a number of other eligibility factors must be met, some of which are summarized below:

- The project must be consistent with the 2012 Colorado Nonpoint Source Management Plan.
- Non-federal matching funds equal to at least 40% of the total project cost are required. Match can be cash and/or in-kind.
- The project must not directly implement a discharge permit requirement, including a final MS4 discharge permit or MS4 permit application requirement.
- The project is not scheduled to begin before summer 2018.

For additional information about project eligibility requirements, please visit npscolorado.com.

While not eligibility requirements, the following factors will affect how watershed plan project proposals submitted in response to the request for applications announced this fall will be ranked:

- The target basins for **watershed-based plan projects** are the Upper and Lower Colorado River, Regulations # 32 and #36 respectively. We will still be accepting proposals for watershed-based plan projects statewide; however, watershed-based plan projects in the target basins will receive additional points during proposal scoring.

NPS Concept Paper Instructions:

If your project idea meets the NPS eligibility requirements and you are interested in feedback, please develop a concept paper no more than four pages in length that follows the outline below and submit the concept paper to cdphe_wqcd_nonpointsource+managers@state.co.us no later than 5 p.m. on September 14, 2016.

The Concept Paper should begin with an introduction that includes the name, telephone number and email address of the project sponsor and a project title of eight words or less.

Items 1 through 5 are the heart of the concept paper. Develop these items clearly so that your proposal will generate useful feedback and lead to a stronger proposal.

1. What is the nonpoint source water quality problem or protection opportunity?

Optional information to help you frame the problem:

- a. Is the waterbody with the problem on the current impaired waterbody list (303(d) list in Regulation 93)? Is the waterbody on the current Monitoring and Evaluation list (M&E list in Regulation 93)?
- b. Does the waterbody have an existing Total Maximum Daily Load document that is being implemented?
- c. Is there an existing or in-progress watershed plan?
- d. Are there other nonpoint source or water quality projects taking place in the watershed or have projects been completed in the past?
- e. Are there data available showing good water quality or water quality showing indicators of impact while still meeting water quality standards?

2. Where is the problem or protection opportunity?

3. How will your project address this nonpoint source problem or protection opportunity?

- a. Can you provide technical details, including potential partnerships and outside help?

Questions to think about might include:

- i. Does the technical approach treat symptoms or correct the cause of impairment or potential impact to good water quality?
- ii. If this is a continuation or extension of a project, what is the success to date?
- iii. What evidence do you have that your approach will work?
- iv. All NPS projects require an Information and Education (I&E) or Outreach component, and should focus on appropriately reaching your target audience.

4. How will you demonstrate or measure the project's success in addressing the problem or protection opportunity?

- a. What benchmarks or measurements do you propose? See Item 8 for further information.

5. How much will the project cost in rough numbers? Please provide a general estimate of the anticipated project costs using the following general categories:

- a. Less than \$25,000
- b. Between \$25,000 and \$75,000
- c. Between \$75,000 and \$150,000
- d. Between \$150,000 and \$250,000
- e. Greater than \$250,000

Remember, Nonpoint Source projects require a match of 40% of the entire project cost. How are you planning to address match requirements?

Optional information: Items 6 through 8 will be useful in developing your concept paper into a proposal but are not required at this time.

6. Partnerships. Are any partnerships essential for this project to succeed? For the Information & Education / Outreach component of the project, identify existing efforts and other partners who can help you reach your identified audience. What you really need is a description of your relationship with your partners/stakeholders.

7. Sustainability.

- a. Will the water quality improvements resulting from the project implementation last beyond the end of the project?
- b. If the project is building or restoring something, is there a commitment to maintain the project after the project is over?

8. Evaluation and monitoring information:

- a. What will be your benchmarks for success (load or concentration reduction, improved habitat, improved macroinvertebrates metrics)? Will you measure impacts at a project, segment, river, watershed and/or multi-watershed scale?
- b. For BMPs, restoration, protection and similar projects, what indicators will you use to determine the project was implemented as proposed (project success versus measure impact of project)?
- c. For Watershed Plans, have all the key stakeholders been identified? Is there a mechanism to engage the majority of stakeholders in the process based on their roles and interests? Is there a process to identify and prioritize the water quality concerns or protection opportunities including addressing the required EPA nine elements?

By thinking about these components early in the process, proposals will more clearly address the nonpoint source water quality problems and restoration and protection goals. Please focus on the underlying water quality issues or protection opportunities by discussing the project idea rather than "selling" the project. After this exercise, you will be prepared to create a project application in response to the request for applications that will be announced in the fall.