



Midpeninsula Regional
Open Space District

LEGISLATIVE, FUNDING, AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

R-21-172
December 14, 2021

AGENDA ITEM 2

AGENDA ITEM

Grant Awards for the 2021 Grantmaking Program

GENERAL MANAGER'S RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Forward the recommended \$91,977 increase to the original \$250,000 grant program funding allocation, which would bring the total 2021 Grantmaking Program funding availability to \$341,977, to the Board of Directors for approval.
2. Forward the list of recommended grant awards for the 2021 Grantmaking Program to the Board of Directors for approval.

SUMMARY

In August 2021, the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District (District) announced the availability of \$250,000 in funding through the 2021 Grantmaking Program grant round, which spans three years from late FY22 into FY25. Organizations were invited to submit proposals for projects up to \$50,000 under 3 priority areas, as outlined in the District's Grantmaking Board Policy 3.01: 1) access, interpretation, and education; 2) applied science; and 3) network and partnership support. The District received a total of 28 short form pre-proposals totaling \$1,025,351 in funding requests. District staff selected 18 of the 28 pre-proposals to move forward to the full proposal stage for additional consideration. A total of 17 full proposals were received by the deadline, totaling \$605,923 in requests.

The General Manager recommends funding 10 proposals composed of seven (7) access, interpretation and education projects and three (3) applied science projects. To fund these 10 proposals, Board approval for an increase of \$91,977 to the original \$250,000 three-year grant program is required, which would bring the total 2021 Grantmaking Program funding availability to \$341,977. Proposed grantees include Coastside Land Trust, Saved by Nature, San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory, Pie Ranch, Vida Verde Nature Education, UC Elkus Ranch, Peninsula Open Space Trust, Dominican University of California, Creekside Science, and San Jose State University. If the Grantmaking Program is kept at \$250,000, the General Manager would then instead recommend six (6) full awards and two (2) partial awards. The two applicants who would receive partial awards, Vida Verde and Pie Ranch each, have confirmed that partial funding would still support successful outcomes, though serve fewer youth. Without the additional funding, Elkus Ranch and Peninsula Open Space Trust would not be included for recommended awards based on scoring.

There are sufficient funds in the adopted FY22 budget to cover the cost of the projected FY22 reimbursement requests. Additional funds will be recommended in future fiscal year budgets to cover subsequent fiscal year reimbursement requests.

If the recommendations are supported by the Legislative, Funding, and Public Affairs Committee (LFPAC), District staff will present the recommendations to the Board of Directors (Board) on January 26, 2022, and work with grantees to finalize grant agreements by the spring of 2022. Grantees will have 3 years to complete the projects following the execution of grant agreements.

DISCUSSION

Background

From 2007 to 2017, the District supported academic research on District lands through its Resource Management Grant Program, which was approved as a Board policy on November 14, 2005, and subsequently amended on November 17, 2010. This program awarded small grants to local researchers to further the District's mission, enhance public education, and advance the District's scientific understanding of natural processes while strengthening local partnerships with researchers. On February 28, 2018, the Board approved the replacement of the prior grant program and policy with Board Policy 3.10, *District Grantmaking Program* ([R-18-19, meeting minutes](#)), which updated the program's focus areas and increased the program's impact by enhancing the investment made in the program. The purpose of the current Grantmaking Program is to: a) support projects that further the District's mission; b) build the capacity of academic and nonprofit institutions to sustain and grow the conservation field; and c) facilitate the District's mission and work by building and strengthening partnerships.

On July 24, 2019, the Board approved the allocation of \$250,000 toward seven (7) projects in the initial 2018 Grantmaking Program grant round, while 2 additional proposals from Santa Cruz Mountains Stewardship Network and Bay Area Older Adults were funded separately as contracts through the Natural Resources and Public Affairs departments, respectively ([R-19-98, meeting minutes](#)). In addition, the Public Affairs department has had an annual partnership contract with Latino Outdoors since 2015 to provide community outreach and outdoor programming on District land and has supported other partnerships through annual sponsorship funding. Grants staff continue to monitor the progress of the seven grantee projects from the 2018 Grantmaking Program grant round, making project modifications as needed throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

Funding priorities

The 2021 Grantmaking Program request for proposals (Attachment 1) invited applicants to submit proposals in alignment with at least one of the following three funding priorities, consistent with Board Policy 3.01, *District Grantmaking Program*:

Access, interpretation, and education

Funding for access, environmental interpretation, and education will be directed towards facilitating equitable access and broad opportunity for all residents to experience District lands while fostering an appreciation for open space protection, nature study, and environmental stewardship. Proposals should focus on projects that contribute an understanding and appreciation of our natural systems, facilitate opportunities for outdoor engagement and nature-based experiences or provide nature-based educational and interpretive experiences for children and/or adults. Applicants are encouraged to emphasize if and how the proposal bridges gaps in

access, widens equitable participation, or otherwise helps lower barriers to traditionally underserved or under-represented communities. Funding can be used for staff time to create or execute programming, provide transportation to opportunities for outdoor engagement or nature-based experiences, facilitate knowledge of outdoor recreational opportunities, broaden access to the outdoors, engage residents in environmental stewardship activities, etc.

Applied science

A host of challenges face our world today. Climate change is impacting ecosystems in a myriad of known and unknown ways, from increased variability in precipitation and vulnerability to fire, to changes in species distributions and dispersal patterns. As a result, ecosystems are facing a combination of new and accelerated stressors, affecting the ability to rebound from any one event. Proposals should focus on academic or practitioner science projects that seek to understand these changes, identify potential response actions that can be taken related to land and resource stewardship practices, and support the protection and enhancement of natural resources on District land. The purpose should be to develop and disseminate information that advances scientific understanding of natural processes.

Network and partnership support

California's largest and most pressing challenges require working together to discover and implement innovative solutions. Landscape-scale stewardship is critical to ensuring solutions are scalable and have broad impact. Consequently, this funding category focuses on grant proposals that cultivate, sustain, or grow established conservation networks. Although future funding rounds may allow for creation of new working groups or networks, only projects submitted by established groups or networks will be considered. Groups or networks should be primarily oriented towards topics that relate to land management, conservation, or public access to outdoor recreation. Applicants are encouraged to emphasize if and how the group or network bridges gaps in access, widens equitable participation, or otherwise removes barriers to traditionally underserved communities. Proposals should focus on developing organizational capacity or implementing projects to engage the group on working together towards developing shared priorities, exchanging best practices, or collaborating on research or educational outreach and education/interpretation, etc.

Solicitation and selection process

Grants staff organized a staff-composed review committee with representatives from the Natural Resources, Planning, Public Affairs and Visitor Services departments to provide technical and analytical support throughout the entire solicitation and selection process. Members of the review committee convened 6 times over a period of 5 months and provided critical support with enhancements to the evaluation criteria and application forms, conducted technical evaluations of proposals, and suggested feedback on ways to enhance the solicitation process for this and future grant rounds.

Due to the persistent issue of social inequity in the environmental field, this year's grant round explored ways the District could provide a more equitable solicitation process. Notably, a short-form pre-proposal stage was added to this year's solicitation process. This preliminary, limited content request reduced the effort and investment required by applicants to submit project ideas for consideration. It also allowed Grants staff and review committee members to conduct a greater number of preliminary project screenings. The result was a greater understanding of interested organizations and funding needs as well as an opportunity to confirm potential project eligibility and seek prospective proposer interest for the three funding priorities. Future

solicitations may include the use of translation services in multiple languages and inviting staff from partner organizations to participate on the review committee.

District staff released the Request for Proposals on August 2, 2021, and broadly distributed it to a range of potentially interested groups and individuals via the District's website, social media, e-newsletter, press release, and interested party lists. A language accommodation statement in Spanish was included on all public notices. On the evening of August 18, 2021, Grants staff hosted a public webinar and informational session via Microsoft Teams, which was attended by 22 organizations and shared as a recording afterward. A total of seven (7) consultation meetings were held with potential applicants prior to the pre-proposal submission deadline of September 1, 2021. To date, there have been no requests for Spanish or other language translation. The recent solicitation process included notification to a broad and diverse list of individuals and 280 organizations. The Grants Program will also continue exploring other approaches, including partnerships with community organizations, to further strengthen outreach efforts among diverse communities for future solicitations.

By September 1, 2021, the District received a total of 28 pre-proposals, including seventeen (17) for access, interpretation, and education, seven (7) for applied science, and three (3) for network and partnership support. In aggregate, a total of \$1,025,351 was requested. Grants staff conducted an initial administrative review to ensure applicants and pre-proposals were eligible under the solicitation guidelines. Then, Grants staff and review committee members scored each of the pre-proposals. Eligible applicants included public agencies, those affiliated with a K-12 school or academic institution, 501(c)(3) non-profit organizations, organizations with a fiscal sponsor, and previous grantees in good standing.

The same set of evaluation criteria was used for both the pre-proposal and full proposal evaluations, except project budgets were not requested for the pre-proposal stage. Proposal evaluations also considered the balance and distribution of funds by geographic area, project type and type of institutions, as well as availability of funds. At each stage, proposals were grouped and evaluated within the applicable funding priority and ranked by average score. The evaluation criteria included:

- Alignment with the District's mission, strategic plan goals, and funding priority
- Clarity of the project scope, deliverables, and timeline
- Project impact and innovation
- Community engagement
- Organizational capacity*
- Cost effectiveness and clarity of the project budget

*To encourage organizations with limited or minimal organizational capacity to apply, applicants were invited to include capacity-building requests (e.g., District subject matter expert input, technical data, reporting assistance) in their proposals and were scored on the clarity of District support requested.

Of the initial 28 pre-proposals received, the review committee selected 18 to move forward, including 10 for access, interpretation, and education, five (5) for applied science, and three (3) for network and partnership support. From the invitations sent, 17 organizations submitted full proposals by the October 22, 2021 deadline. One organization chose not to participate. In aggregate, a total of \$605,823 was requested.

Proposed awards

Based on the evaluation criteria, the goals set forth in Board Policy 3.01, and the District's commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion, the General Manager recommends fully funding 10 proposals, which include seven (7) access, interpretation and education projects and three (3) applied science projects. This recommendation includes an increase of \$91,977 to the original \$250,000 Grantmaking Program allocation in order to fully fund the 10 recommended proposals.

If awarded, the seven access, interpretation, and education projects would connect Bay Area youth and adults in traditionally underserved or disadvantaged urban and rural communities to nature, promote agricultural-based education on the San Mateo County coast, and support regional trail planning with agency partners and the public. Additionally, the three applied science projects would support field research and ecological restoration conducted by undergraduates and established researchers.

Due to the high number of competitive proposals received, there were significantly more projects than could be funded. Scoring did not identify a proposal for award consideration under the networks and partnership priority. Two of the proposed grantees, Vida Verde and San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory, were awarded previous grants in the 2018 Grantmaking Program grant round and are in good standing.

District staff have consulted with each of the prospective grantees about the potential awards. If the recommended \$341,977 in funding for 10 full awards is approved, the 10 applicants are prepared to accept the full awards. If the Grantmaking Program remains at \$250,000, the General Manager would instead recommend six (6) full awards and two (2) partial awards. The two applicants who would receive partial awards, Vida Verde and Pie Ranch each, have confirmed that partial funding would still support successful outcomes, though serve fewer youth. Without the additional funding, Elkus Ranch and Peninsula Open Space Trust would not be included in the recommended awards based on scoring.

Abstracts of the full proposals received are included in Attachment 2. A more detailed matrix of full proposal requests and proposed awards is included in Attachment 3. Below is a summary list of the recommended 10 awards.

Applicant	Funding priority	Total requested	Proposed award
Coastside Land Trust	Access, interpretation and education	\$25,000	\$25,000
Saved by Nature	Access, interpretation and education	\$24,783	\$24,783
San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory	Access, interpretation and education	\$24,980	\$24,980
Pie Ranch	Access, interpretation and education	\$50,000	\$50,000
Vida Verde Nature Education	Access, interpretation and education	\$50,000	\$50,000
UC Elkus Ranch	Access, interpretation and education	\$17,250	\$17,250
Peninsula Open Space Trust	Access, interpretation and education	\$25,000	\$25,000

Dominican University of California	Applied science	\$25,000	\$25,000
Creekside Science	Applied science	\$50,000	\$50,000
San Jose State University	Applied science	\$49,964	\$49,964
Total		\$341,977	\$341,977

Grant administration

Grants staff would be responsible for administering grant agreements and monitoring grantee project progress and may also include a representative from another department to provide subject matter expertise or other capacity-building support to grantees. Per the grant agreement, grantees would submit reimbursement requests up to four times per year, subject to the terms and conditions of the grant agreement. Payment requests must include a payment request form, budget tracking sheet, and proof of expense documentation. Grantees are required to submit progress reports to the District along with each payment request. Progress reports must contain a brief description of what has been achieved towards advancing the objectives of the District-approved work plan and the actual versus budgeted spending of grant funds. Additionally, grantees with grant awards over \$25,000 must submit an annual report no later than June 30 each year. Grantees may also be required to identify the District during public announcements and in printed or web-based public materials relating to the project. Grantees must request a District logo file and acknowledgment guidance prior to use. Grantees may also be asked to prepare a presentation to the Board, if requested.

FISCAL IMPACT

There are sufficient funds in the adopted FY22 budget to cover the cost of the projected FY22 reimbursement requests. Funds would be recommended in future fiscal year budgets as a part of the annual Budget and Action Plan process to cover future fiscal year reimbursement requests.

Expenditures for this round of grantees are currently planned as followed:

FY22	FY23	FY24	FY25	Total
\$40,000	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$101,977	\$341,977

BOARD AND COMMITTEE REVIEW

- February 2018: The Board approved Board Policy 3.10 – *District Grantmaking Program* as a Replacement to the Resource Management Grant Program. ([R-18-19](#), [meeting minutes](#))
- June 2019: LFPAC reviewed the recommended grant awards for the 2018 Grantmaking Program. ([R-19-71](#), [meeting minutes](#))
- July 2019: The Board approved the recommended grant awards for the 2018 Grantmaking Program. ([R-19-98](#), [meeting minutes](#))

PUBLIC NOTICE

Public notice was provided as required by the Brown Act, and an interested party public notice was emailed to the District's current list.

CEQA COMPLIANCE

Six of the 10 proposals recommended for funding are not considered projects under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The environmental review of the four proposals considered projects under CEQA is discussed below:

Coastside Land Trust: Coastside Land Trust will ensure that the appropriate level of environmental review is conducted, and any necessary permits are secured prior to initiation of restoration and stewardship work in coastal prairie, scrub and wetland habitat.

Dominican University of California: The District determined that the evaluation of habitat suitability, amphibian diversity and abundance, and skin microbiomes and individual health of terrestrial salamanders across multiple fire-affected areas and undisturbed sites is exempt under Class 6 of the CEQA Guidelines as follows:

Section 15306: Basic data collection, research, experimental management, and resource evaluation activities that do not result in major disturbances to an environmental resource.

San Jose State University: The District determined that the invasive species removal and habitat restoration projects proposed by SJSU are covered under the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) prepared for the Wildland Fire Program, which the Board approved on May 12, 2021 ([R-21-58, meeting minutes](#)). The project's vegetation management activities will incorporate the appropriate mitigation measures and BMPs from the EIR.

Creekside Science: The District determined that conducting site characterizations and plot data from grassland surveys designed to characterize relationships between species and environment followed by data analysis is exempt under Article under Class 6 of the CEQA Guidelines as follows:

Section 15306: Basic data collection, research, experimental management, and resource evaluation activities that do not result in major disturbances to an environmental resource.

NEXT STEPS

If LFPAC concurs with the recommendations, staff would bring the recommendations to the full Board on January 26, 2021. Pending Board approval of the proposed awards, Grants staff will work with each of the grantees to execute a total of up to 10 grant agreements by spring of 2022 and begin monitoring the progress of grantee projects. Grantee projects will be complete no later than 3 years after the grant agreement execution date.

Attachments

1. 2021 Grantmaking Program Request for Proposals
2. Proposal Abstracts
3. Recommended Grant Awards Matrix

Responsible Department Head:

Stefan Jaskulak, Chief Financial Officer and Director of Administrative Services

Prepared by / Contact persons:

Deborah Hirst, Grants Program Manager, Administrative Services

Jordan McDaniel, Senior Grants & Procurement Technician, Administrative Services

Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District Fiscal Year 2022 Grantmaking Program Request for Proposals



RFP released: August 2, 2021

Pre-proposals due: Sept. 1, 2021 by 5 p.m.

Full proposals by invitation due: Oct. 22, 2021 by 5 p.m.

Questions? Contact:

Grants Program team at grants@openspace.org or (650) 625-6507

Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District

330 Distel Circle, Los Altos, CA 94022

Para obtener ayuda en español sobre esta solicitud de becas, favor de contactarnos por correo electrónico: grants@openspace.org o por teléfono: (650) 691-1200

Table of Contents

Background	3
Who We Are	3
Mission Statement	3
Coastside Protection Mission Statement	3
Funding Opportunity	3
Grant Program Priorities	4
Applied Science	4
Network and Partnership Support	5
Access, Interpretation and Education	5
Grant Program Requirements	6
Eligible Recipients	6
Grant Period	6
Project Location	6
Eligible Costs	6
Ineligible Costs	7
Matching Funds	7
Application Process	8
Evaluation Criteria	9
Tentative Application and Award Schedule	10
Requirements if Funded	10
Appendix A – Grant Pre-proposal	13
Appendix B – Full Proposal (by invitation only)	14

Background

Who We Are

The Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District (Midpen) is an independent special district in the San Francisco Bay Area that has preserved a regional greenbelt system of nearly 65,000 acres of public land and manages 26 open space preserves. These diverse and scenic landscapes, from bay wetlands to redwood forests and coastal grasslands, host an incredible diversity of life, making our region one of the world's biodiversity hotspots.

Midpen preserves have long and complex histories of human use prior to becoming public open space. We actively manage the land and waterways to restore their health and function, helping our local ecosystem become more resilient in a time of climate change. By caring for the land, the land in turn takes care of us, providing tangible and intangible benefits like clean air and water, flood protection, carbon sequestration, and the opportunity for restorative experiences in nature.

On the San Mateo County Coast, where local agricultural roots run deep, our mission also includes preserving viable working lands. We partner with local ranchers to use conservation grazing as a land management tool for enhancing native coastal grasslands and providing wildland fire protection.

Midpen preserves are free and open to the public daily, providing an extensive trail network for ecologically sensitive recreation. Our programming connects people to nature through enriched experiences, including environmental interpretation, docent-led activities, and volunteer opportunities.

By preserving, restoring, and providing access to our region's iconic, cultural, working, and scenic landscapes, Midpen lands offer us opportunities for health, climate change resilience and refuge.

Mission Statement

To acquire and preserve a regional greenbelt of open space land in perpetuity, protect and restore the natural environment, and provide opportunities for ecologically sensitive public enjoyment and education.

Coastside Protection Mission Statement

To acquire and preserve in perpetuity open space land and agricultural land of regional significance, protect and restore the natural environment, preserve rural character, encourage viable agricultural use of land resources, and provide opportunities for ecologically sensitive public enjoyment and education.

Funding Opportunity

A total of \$250,000 in funding is available for organizations and projects that further the understanding and protection of our natural world, build capacity in the conservation field, and facilitate access to the outdoors or augment interpretation and education opportunities for the public.

The grantmaking process is guided by an emphasis on investments that reflect a regional focus and provide avenues for partnership with Midpen or other stakeholders. Consistent with Midpen's Board Policy 3.10, the Grantmaking Program is committed to soliciting proposals from a diverse range of community based and other nonprofit organizations, K-12 schools, student researchers, academic institutions, and public agencies, and is encouraging first time applicants and organizations that reach underserved communities to apply.

Midpen is accepting proposals for three funding priorities, outlined below:

- Applied science - advancing scientific understanding of natural processes and/or promoting environmental stewardship.
- Partnership and network support - cultivating, sustaining and growing conservation networks.
- Access, interpretation, and education - educating and promoting open space protection.

Two funding tiers are available:

- Tier 1 for projects up to \$25,000; and
- Tier 2 for projects from \$25,001 to \$50,000.

Midpen is accepting proposals for all three Funding Priorities for both tier 1 and tier 2 awards.

Grantmaking Program awards from Fiscal Year 2019 can be found on Midpen's Grantmaking Program web page: <https://www.openspace.org/grantmaking-program>.

Grant Program Priorities

Applied Science

Proposals under the Applied Science priority should focus on academic or practitioner science projects that support the protection and enhancement of natural resources on Midpen lands. The purpose should be to develop and disseminate information that advances scientific understanding of natural processes. Proposals submitted in this round must focus on *Our Changing Ecosystems*, described below.

Our Changing Ecosystems

A host of challenges face our world today. Climate change is impacting ecosystems in a myriad of known and unknown ways, from increased variability in precipitation and vulnerability to fire, to changes in species distributions and dispersal patterns. As a result, ecosystems are facing a combination of accelerated and new stressors, affecting the ability to rebound from any one event. Proposals should focus on research that seeks to understand these changes and identify potential response actions that can be taken related to land and resource stewardship practices.

Types of projects may include applied academic research or proof-of-concept, and may cover a variety of topics relating to *Our Changing Ecosystems* such as:

- Climate change and carbon sequestration
- Habitat loss or climate change
- Habitat fragmentation
- Population shifts
- Plant pathogens
- Fire ecology
- Extreme heat
- Drought and flood management or watershed function
- Sea level rise and shoreline resiliency
- Public access
- Land management

Example projects:

- Research that examines the ecology and potential mitigation strategies to combat the spread of *Phytophthora* species that are of concern.
- Vegetation mapping that contributes to an understanding of how ecosystems are changing (e.g., fine-scale fire risk mapping that results in a coordinated approach to vegetation management).
- Regional carbon sequestration actions on working/agricultural lands.

Network and Partnership Support

California's largest and most pressing challenges require working together to discover and implement innovative solutions. Landscape-scale stewardship is critical to ensuring solutions are scalable and have broad impact. Consequently, this funding category focuses on grant proposals that cultivate, sustain, or grow established conservation networks.

Although future funding rounds may allow for creation of new working groups or networks, in this round only projects submitted by established groups or networks will be considered. Groups or networks should be primarily oriented towards topics that relate to land management, conservation, or public access to outdoor recreation. Applicants are encouraged to emphasize if and how the group or network bridges gaps in access, widens equitable participation, or otherwise helps lower barriers to traditionally underserved communities.

Proposals should focus on developing organizational capacity or implementing projects to engage the group on working together towards developing shared priorities, exchanging best practices, or collaborating on research or educational outreach and education/interpretation, etc. Please note that funds cannot be used for policy or advocacy work and therefore lobbying support is not an eligible project type.

Example projects:

- Development of a network-wide data sharing system.
- Consulting support and staff time to build a strategic plan for a working group to coalesce around a shared understanding for how participants will work together.
- Consulting support and staff time to leverage existing network capacity with a wider outreach to engage diverse partner organizations (e.g., serving additional age groups, diverse abilities, and/or traditionally under-represented communities)
- Consulting support or staff time to build organizational capacity towards building the network strengthening communication and collaboration under a joint vision.
- Support to organize convenings to share research and best practices related to natural resource management.

Access, Interpretation and Education

Funding for access, environmental interpretation, and education will be directed towards facilitating equitable access and broad opportunity for all residents to experience Midpen lands while fostering an appreciation for open space protection, nature study, and environmental stewardship. Proposals should focus on projects that contribute an understanding and appreciation of our natural systems, facilitate opportunities for outdoor engagement and nature-based experiences or provide nature-based educational and interpretive experiences for children and/or adults. Applicants are encouraged to emphasize if and how the proposal bridges gaps in access, widens equitable participation, or otherwise helps lower barriers to traditionally underserved or under-represented communities.

Funding can be used for staff time to create or execute programming, provide transportation to opportunities for outdoor engagement or nature-based experiences, facilitate knowledge of outdoor recreational opportunities, broaden access to the outdoors, engage residents in environmental stewardship activities, etc. Transportation-related projects must be to and from Midpen preserves.

Example projects:

- Public access or educational programs for families or students.
- Develop and/or improve interpretive signs and services along trails, including bilingual materials.
- Complete gaps in a regional trail system that connect communities to trails and open space (e.g. outreach and engagement strategies for community and partner support for regional trail connections).
- Outreach and activity programs that encourage outdoor engagement and nature-based experiences in underserved communities.

Grant Program Requirements

Eligible Recipients

Eligible applicants must be one of the following: a public agency; affiliated with a K-12 school or academic institution; a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization; or an organization with a fiscal sponsor. Applicants with eligible projects may work through a [fiscal sponsor](#) to apply if the fiscal sponsorship is established before proposal submittal and the project has a primarily charitable, scientific, or educational purpose.

Faculty at accredited academic institutions must sponsor research-related projects; practitioner science projects may require faculty sponsorship and will be determined on a case-by-case basis. Please contact the Grants Program team prior to proposal submittal to establish whether a faculty sponsorship will be required.

Applicants from the FY18-19 Grantmaking solicitation cycle are eligible to apply for a second award.

Grant Period

Projects funded through this program must be complete and funded expended by three years after the grant agreement is executed.

Project Location

Projects without a field work component can take place outside [Midpen boundaries](#). All proposed field work must take place on Midpen preserves. Transportation-related projects must be to and from Midpen preserves. Proposals with a regional focus are encouraged.

Eligible Costs

Grant funds may be used to cover expenses related to the implementation of proposed projects within the approved project budget. Eligible expenses must be incurred during the performance period as specified in the grant agreement.

ELIGIBLE COSTS		
Budget Item	Eligible Cost	Required Documentation
Salaries, Wages, and Benefits	Salaries and wages of employees employed by the grantee who is directly engaged in the execution of the grant project. Benefits include employer contribution of fringe benefits.	Timesheets or similar documentation detailing days and hours worked on the project.
Consultants and Contractors	Direct consultant and contractual services necessary to achieve the objectives of the grant.	Invoices from consultant/contractor identifying expenditure, services performed and period of services.
Travel	Travel costs associated with travel to and from project sites, meetings, etc., directly related to the grant project. Costs must be considered reasonable and necessary for the completion of the project.	Receipts identifying travel costs (i.e., lodging, rental cars). Mileage must be documented by either employee travel claims or vehicle mileage logs for vehicles owned by the grantee.
Equipment and Supplies	Supplies and/or equipment required for project or program execution. Purchased supplies and/or equipment are to remain in the possession of the grantee during and after project completion.	Receipts identifying item purchased, cost, and date of purchase. Use of grantee equipment must be substantiated with an equipment usage log that identifies the equipment used, rate, and total rental cost.
Indirect Costs	Indirect Costs are costs associated with doing business that are of a general nature and are incurred to benefit two or more functions within the grantee organization.	Applied on a percentage basis of direct costs.

Ineligible Costs

The following activities and costs are not eligible:

- Conducting lobbying, carrying on propaganda, or otherwise attempting to influence legislation or political decision making
- Influencing the outcome of any specific election through any means
- Purposes other than those that are charitable, scientific, or educational
- Fundraising
- Budget shortfalls or endowment funds
- Scholarships, fellowships, or grants to individuals
- Land acquisition or real estate purchases
- Costs incurred before or after the project performance period
- Late fees, penalties, and bank fees

Matching Funds

Matching or in-kind funds are not required but applicants are encouraged to look for creative ways to combine funds to create a more complete or effective project.

Application Process

A public webinar will be hosted online on Wednesday, August 18 at 7:00 PM. The webinar will be recorded and available online afterward.

Pre-proposals will be accepted through September 1, 2021 by 5:00 PM. The Grantmaking Review Committee will be conducting preliminary screenings to (1) develop an understanding of interested organizations and potential grant applicants across the three funding priorities, and (2) ensure appropriate project endeavors and a balance across the three grantmaking priorities. Applicants are encouraged to schedule consultations prior to submission of their pre-proposal. See Appendix A for pre-proposal and submission guidelines.

Based on pre-proposals received, applicants will be invited to submit a full proposal by October 22, 2021 by 5:00PM. Not every applicant may be invited to submit a full proposal.

Applicants submitting Applied Science projects are required to consult with Midpen staff prior to full proposal submittal to determine whether faculty sponsorship is required. See Appendix B for full proposal and submission guidelines.

Midpen is not soliciting, does not wish to receive, and will not treat any information received in a grant proposal as proprietary or confidential.

Preliminary Grant Award Selection

Midpen's Grantmaking Review Committee will rank pre-proposals and full proposals based on the following considerations:

- Technical review scores and comments based on the Evaluation Criteria below.
- Balance/distribution of funds by geographic area, project type or type of institutions, and availability of funds.

The Grantmaking Review Committee may recommend modifications, such as reducing the requested grant award amounts to meet current and potential future program priorities, funding targets, and available funding limitations.

General Manager and Board Action

The Grantmaking Review Committee's grant award recommendations will be presented to Midpen's executive team and general manager. The general manager will consider the comments and recommendations from the entire review process and will determine the final grant award recommendations to be presented to the board of director's Legislative, Funding and Public Affairs Committee for consideration prior to presenting the recommendations to the full board of director for funding approval. The board of directors has sole and absolute discretion to approve or reject funding for a project. Upon approval, the Grants Program team will work with selected applicants to develop grant funding agreements.

Evaluation Criteria

Criteria	Points
Alignment with Midpen’s mission and goals and Grantmaking Program priority Scoring for this category is based on how well the applicant demonstrates that their project would: - Promote Midpen’s mission and Strategic Plan goals (FY22 Update). - Advance the goals set forth by the applicable Grantmaking Program priority (applied science; network and partnership support; or access, interpretation and education).	20
Project Scope Scoring for this category is based on how well the applicant demonstrates: - A clear project description with key project deliverables that are aligned with the Project Budget. - A timeline that is feasible and will be completed within the grant performance period.	20
Impact Scoring for this category is based on how well the applicant demonstrates the likelihood the project will have a profound impact or address a specific need, or how well the project employs a new or innovative methodology, program, or management technique.	20
Engagement Scoring for this category is based on how well the project reaches underserved communities, broadens the range of organizations served by Midpen, has strong public support and/or was developed with widespread community participation, or involves one or more partner agencies or organizations.	20
Organizational Capacity Scoring for this category is based on how well the applicant demonstrates they have the capacity, expertise, resources, and support to ensure project completion. Note: Midpen will evaluate requests for capacity-building support to engage a broader range of grantees (e.g., subject matter expert input, technical data, reporting assistance). Scoring for this category is also based on clarity of the support requested from Midpen.	10
Preliminary Project Budget Scoring for this category is based on the cost-effectiveness of the budget and how it aligns with the project description, intended outcomes and/or deliverables. Note: pre-proposals do not require a project budget to be submitted and will not be evaluated against this criterion.	10
Maximum Points	100

Tentative Application and Award Schedule

PROPOSAL SOLICITATION		
	Grant application packet released	July 30, 2021
	Public workshop	Wednesday, August 18, 2021 at 7:00 PM
	Pre-proposals due	Wednesday, September 1, 2021 by 5:00 PM
	Invitations to submit full proposals	Monday, September 20, 2021
	Full proposals due	Friday, October 22, 2021 by 5:00 PM
REVIEW & AWARD		
	Staff screens applications Note: Applicants may be contacted to provide minor clarifications to their proposals	October 25, 2021 – November 10, 2021
	Review committee prepares award recommendations	November/December 2021
	Committee and board meetings for award decisions	December 2021 – January 2022
AWARD PROCESING		
	Award notifications	January 2022
	<u>Earliest</u> date grant agreements are anticipated to be executed and projects begin Note: Some grant agreements may take longer	February 2022

Requirements if Funded

Reimbursements

Funds can be disbursed after a fully executed grant agreement is in place. Midpen will issue payments on a reimbursement basis, barring exceptions for projects with demonstrable need. Reimbursement requests can be submitted as frequently as quarterly but at least annually if reimbursable expenses are accrued.

Advance payments may be considered at the Midpen's discretion and with demonstrable need. No advance payment shall exceed 25% of the total grant award. Advances must be fully utilized within a six-month period unless additional time is approved by Midpen.

Reimbursement requests must be accompanied by documentation that details the work performed over the reporting period, a budget report that demonstrates which funds are being requested for reimbursement against the fund balance, and appropriate receipts or other necessary documentation. Midpen has designed the forms and procedures to keep organizational effort to the minimum for grantees.

Reporting

Grantees are required to provide Midpen with progress updates throughout the project performance period. Tier 2 grantees must submit annual reports detailing project progress along with a financial report to describe how the funds were spent based on the budget submitted. Tier 1 grantees will not be required to submit annual narrative reports but will be asked for brief status updates along with payment requests.

Tier 2 grantees should submit an annual narrative report (5 pages or fewer) and include:

- Project highlights (e.g., new opportunities discovered, partnerships developed).
- Project delays related to anticipated activities or milestones, the reason for the delay and how this might impact the project's goals, budget, or timeline.
- Proposed changes to the approach, project, timeline, or budget for the upcoming year.
- Total expenditures against the project budget.

Loss of Funding

The following are examples of actions that may result in loss of funding:

- Grantee fails to obtain a grant agreement.
- Grantee fails to complete the funded project (conform substantially to the agreement).
- Grantee fails to submit all documentation within the time periods specified in the grant agreement.
- Grantee fails to secure environmental clearance to comply with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) or other necessary project permits.
- Grantee changes the project scope without the concurrence of Midpen.
- Grantee terminates the project by written notice 30 days in advance.

Changes or Amendments

Grantees seeking changes to the scope or budget (greater than 10% from a budget category) must obtain Midpen's approval. Changes in project scope must continue to meet the need cited in the original proposal. Grantee will jeopardize funding should changes be made without prior notice and approval by Midpen.

Audits and Accountability

Projects are subject to audit annually and for three years following the final payment of grant funds. If the project is selected for audit, grantee will be contacted in advance. The audit shall include all books, papers, accounts, documents, or other records of grantee, as they relate to the project. All project expenditure documentation should be available for an audit, whether paid with grant funds or other funds. Grantee must maintain an accounting system that accurately reflects fiscal transactions, with the necessary controls and safeguards to provide an adequate audit trail.

Project Recognition

Grantees will be required to identify the funding source during public announcements relating to the project. Printed or web-based public materials relating to the project should acknowledge Midpen as a funding source. In addition, if the grantee uses social media, the grantee should acknowledge the project and Midpen funding at major milestones, as well as other sources of public outreach, such as newsletters or blog posts whenever possible.

In addition, the Grants Program team will prepare an annual report to the board of directors on the Grantmaking Program that details the proposals received as well as those selected for funding, and the results of research received. Grantees must be available to present to the board of directors annually, if requested.

Public announcements relating to the project should be listed in the grantees annual grant reports to Midpen (tier 2 grantees), or in disbursement requests (tier 1 grantees).

Entry Restrictions

Eligible projects must not result in permanent damage and/or impairment to habitats or natural resources on Midpen lands and will be in compliance with Midpen's Permit to Enter procedures (required for each research project).

Appendix A – Grant Pre-proposal

Applicants will select the appropriate Grantmaking Program priority and funding tier. Submit this form to the Grants Program team at grants@openspace.org.

Applicant Information		
Organization	Mailing address	Tax status
Name and title of applicant	Email	Phone number
Name and title of project manager (if separate from applicant)	Email	Phone number
Pre-proposal Information		
Grantmaking Program priority	Funding tier	Requested grant amount
Project title		
Project Summary		
<u>Instructions:</u> Describe the project alignment with the applicable Grantmaking Program priority. Include key tasks, intended outcomes or deliverables, timeline, potential partnerships, project team and intended audience or population served. Specify which project element(s) would be funded by the grant (500-word maximum).		
Criteria Highlight		
<u>Instructions:</u> Select one of the 6 evaluation criteria and describe how the proposed project aligns with the selected criterion (150-word maximum).		

Appendix B – Full Proposal (by invitation only)

Applicants will select the appropriate Grantmaking Program priority and funding tier. Submit this form, all items listed below in the application checklist, and proposal narrative via email to the Grants Program team at grants@openspace.org.

Applicant Information		
Organization	Mailing address	Tax status
Name and title of applicant	Email	Phone number
Name and title of project manager (if separate from applicant)	Email	Phone number
Proposal Information		
Grantmaking Program priority	Funding tier	Requested grant amount
Project title		
1-2 sentence description of project for announcement (e.g., social media, press release, etc.)		

Application Checklist
Instructions: Submit each of the following attachments along with this form. Please use the file name conventions described below. 1. Proposal narrative (PDF format; filename: "Narrative") 2. Project team (PDF format; filename: "Team") ○ Provide brief description of role and bios for key members and identify team lead. 3. Project location map (PDF format; filename: "Location Map") ○ Provide if applicable. 4. Financial information ○ Non-profits to submit their most recent IRS Form 990 or internally prepared financial statements (preferably audited) ○ Schools and public agencies to submit recent annual budgets ○ Large institutions to provide department or program budget ○ If the application includes a fiscal sponsor, the financial statements should be for the fiscal sponsor. 5. Fiscal sponsor documentation (filename: "Fiscal Sponsor") ○ Provide 2 years of audited financial documents and a letter of support from a fiscal sponsor, if applicable. If audited documents are not available, then non-audited financial documents will be accepted. 6. Faculty sponsor or collaborative partner documentation (filename: "Faculty Sponsor") ○ Provide a letter of support if faculty sponsorship or partner contributions are required.

Proposal Narrative

Instructions: Applicants are encouraged to review the scoring criteria to ensure their responses adequately address each criterion. The proposal narrative should not exceed 3 pages for tier 1 applications and 5 pages for tier 2 applications. Please answer the following questions:

Alignment with Midpen's mission and goals and Grantmaking Program priority

- Describe how this project promotes Midpen's [mission](#) and [Strategic Plan goals](#) (FY22 Update).
- Describe how this project advances the goals of the applicable Grantmaking Program priority (applied science; network and partnership support; or access, interpretation and education).

Project Scope

- Describe the proposed project including key tasks, intended outcomes or project deliverables, and project team. Key tasks must align with tasks described in the project budget.
- Provide a project timeline and estimated completion dates for key project deliverables
- Discuss the status of any permission, permits, or other approvals this project requires.
- Describe the challenges you expect to encounter and how you will address them.

Impact

- Describe the project's anticipated impact.
- Describe how the project employs innovative approaches.
- Describe how the project aligns with the long-term goals of your organization.

Organizational Capacity

- Describe your organization, including the mission and vision, and its ability to successfully implement the project. If applicable, please describe both the fiscal sponsor and sponsored organization.
- Does your organization require support from Midpen to achieve the project as described in this proposal? If so, describe or discuss your support in addition to grant funding (e.g., subject matter expert input, technical data, reporting assistance) needed from Midpen.

Engagement

- Describe how the project reaches underserved communities, broadens the range of organizations served by Midpen, has strong public support and/or was developed with widespread community participation, or involves one or more partner agency or organization beyond Midpen.

Project Budget				
Instructions: Please list budget task line items that <u>directly relate</u> to the project scope. Review the listed eligible and ineligible costs in the RFP for detail on allowable expenses.				
<i>Task #</i>	<i>Budget Task Line-Item Description</i>	<i>Requested Amount</i>	<i>Other Sources (if applicable)</i>	<i>Total Task Amount</i>
TOTAL GRANT REQUEST				
Project Budget Narrative				
Instructions: Describe the cost-effectiveness of the project budget and how the budget line items align with project deliverables or intended outcomes. Describe any other sources of funding, including in-kind support. Matching funds are not required. (200-words max)				

Please check the following boxes as applicable:

- ☐ The Project will be entirely funded by a Midpen grant (matching funds not required), or
- ☐ The Project requires additional funds by other sources beyond a Midpen grant and applicant resources.

Other Funding Sources		
Instructions: If the project requires additional funds by other sources beyond a Midpen grant and applicant resources, list all funds that will be used.		
<i>Funding Source</i>	<i>Received, Committed, or Pending Review</i>	<i>Amount of Funds</i>
TOTAL OTHER FUNDING		

Recommended Awards

Coastside Land Trust

Junior Land Stewards Program

Funding priority: Access, interpretation, and education

Request amount: \$25,000

Score: 93%

Coastside Land Trust would organize and implement 2 years of the Junior Land Stewards Program (JLSP), a year-long, outdoor education and habitat stewardship program at no cost for approximately 200 4th grade students from the Cabrillo Unified School District (CUSD) in coastal San Mateo County. The program is part of school day activities for all students in the participating grade and, as such, reaches underserved members of the community. CUSD 2019 demographics (most recently reported) were: >50% Hispanic/Latinx, ~25% English Language Learners, >35% and >40% eligible for free and reduced-price meals, respectively. Household income thresholds for free and reduced-price meals are below state limits for “extremely low” and “very low,” respectively. By integrating land stewardship into local public-school classrooms, this program is helping teachers implement state science standards, and developing the skills and passion among students for stewarding open spaces in their communities and beyond. The program also includes field lessons and training for ~35 students in high school environmental science classes who earn volunteer credit as small-group field trip instructors for 4th graders. The JLSP culminates in a spring community event and art show featuring student work at Coastside Land Trust’s gallery in Half Moon Bay. Outreach materials are created in Spanish and English. Partnerships include CUSD administrators and educators, California State Parks, California Native Plant Society, Point Blue Conservation Science, Go Native, John Muir Laws Nature/Science Journaling, San Mateo Resource Conservation District, Xerxes Society, and BEETLES.

Dominican University of California

Funding priority: Applied science

Request amount: \$25,000

Score: 88%

The Dominican University of California (DUC) proposes to implement an undergraduate-led wildfire ecology monitoring project using terrestrial salamanders of the San Francisco Bay Area. The guiding question for the proposed work is: *What are the effects of increased wildfire regimes on wildlife hosts, their microbial symbionts, and pathogens?* The team would assess terrestrial salamander populations and habitat suitability, conduct genetics research to compare genetic diversity of salamanders, and assess the microbiomes and frequency of fungal pathogens of these amphibians among wildfire impacted and unimpacted sites throughout their range. The DUC has been collecting data on terrestrial salamanders since 2018, which presents an ideal and unique natural experiment to characterize how increased fire regimes affect both beneficial and

pathogenic symbionts. Sixty-eight percent of DUC students belong to an ethnically diverse group, and twenty-three percent are first-generation college students. All undergraduate students in the department perform research through four required research methodology courses. Apart from a healthy research infrastructure, the DUC campus in San Rafael is located central to several of the major 2020 wildfire events in the northern part of the state. The proximity to potential study sites eases the efforts needed to involve students in fieldwork and across the entire research process. Finally, the interdisciplinary approach necessary to assess responses of amphibian hosts, their pathogens and microbiomes to wildfires would guarantee that the students involved would acquire experience in microbiology, ecology, genetics, and ecotoxicology research fields.

Saved by Nature**Get Saved by Nature in Midpen Preserves****Funding priority: Access, interpretation, and education****Request amount: \$24,783****Score: 84%**

Saved by Nature would organize and implement 9 field trips to District preserves for approximately 270 students from the Oak Grove School District. Led by highly qualified Naturalist Richard Tejada, students from underserved and low-socioeconomic status households would gain an appreciation of nature, both cerebral and spiritual, and gain a passion for environmental conservation and preservation. Program content includes Native American history, watershed education, and redwood forest history and life cycle. Approximately 95% of participants come from low to moderate income families and are housing, food, and healthcare insecure, 77% are eligible for the school Free and Reduced-price Lunch Program, 62% are from single heads of households, and 40% have English as a second language. Additionally, 98% are urban opportunity youth, and 92% reside in high crime neighborhoods. Partnering organizations, Youth Alliance and Boys & Girls Clubs staff, call Spanish speaking parents to explain each field trip, answer questions, and assist parents with permission slips. Parents are also invited to serve as chaperones to experience and adventure into nature for themselves.

Creekside Science**Funding priority: Applied science****Request amount: \$50,000****Score: 84%**

Grasslands nestled in the mosaic of forests and shrublands are a signature habitat on Midpen lands and pose numerous management challenges in a rapidly changing environment. Typically dominated by invasive non-native grasses and forbs, California grasslands can support diverse native plants – Russian Ridge is an exemplar. But the species composition of “annual grasslands” beyond a few sites is poorly known. Diffuse stands of native perennial grasses and forbs often lurk within dense stands of non-natives and can only be detected by ground surveys.

Quantitative understanding of the environmental and management drivers of grassland composition is essential for conserving, managing, and restoring grassland biodiversity as climate changes across the Santa Cruz Mountains. This project involves two seasons of grassland surveys designed to efficiently characterize relationships between species and environment, followed by data analysis, a scientific report, and a series of short, informative pieces about District grasslands for resource management and interpretive staff.

San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory**Expanding Access to Environmental Education****Funding priority: Access, interpretation and education****Request amount: \$24,980****Score: 83%**

San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory would expand access to environmental education and science engagement through three components of their education program. The first component involves developing curriculum and implementing a pilot field trip program for high school students who would learn about the network of Motus radio telemetry towers used to track individually tagged animals to understand bird migration and inform conservation. For this component of the project, SFBBO has received strong support from East Palo Alto schoolteachers, city employees, and city council members and secured a partnership with Environmental Volunteers, an environmental nonprofit, to assist with planning and implementation of field trips. The second component involves 10 Birdy Hour Talks, which are free, virtual talks that were first launched during the pandemic to foster an appreciation for nature, increase understanding of the scientific process and conservation efforts, and inspire the public to help birds. Funds would support a modest speaker honorarium that would assist in the recruitment of and formation of new partnership with speakers of diverse backgrounds. Funds would also support making events accessible by providing closed captions, facilitating participation by those with hearing loss, and allowing for improved translations to other languages. The third component involves approximately 15 field experiences at District preserves and transportation support for local underserved communities.

Pie Ranch**Funding priority: Access, interpretation, and education****Request amount: \$50,000****Score: 81%**

Pie Ranch would provide high-quality, flexible nature-based experiences for approximately 500 K-12 students from traditionally underserved and under-represented communities through their Youth Education Program, which aims to empower a diverse generation of eco-literate youth leaders by inspiring youth to discover and explore their relationships with nature, peers, their communities, and themselves. Pie Ranch would deliver hands-on learning experiences, including educational field trips to their farm, in-school and after-school programming, YouthCorp work

experiences, internships, and summer programs that provide enriching outdoor engagement for youth. Partnerships include the La Honda-Pescadero School District and 15-20 other Bay Area schools, Puente de la Costa Sur, and BIPOC-led organizations such as the Amah Mutsun Tribal Band, Latinx-led Puente, and others. In a typical year before the COVID-19 pandemic, about half of the youth served by Pie Ranch come from economically disadvantaged households and qualify for free or reduced school meals, 65-80% are youth of color, and a large proportion are Latinx.

San Jose State University**Funding priority: Applied science****Request amount: \$49,964****Score: 82%**

Field-based inquiry provides a unique opportunity for students to connect with natural areas and enhance their understanding of ecological processes. This project would engage students in the Department of Environmental Studies (DES) at San José State University (SJSU) with planning, implementing, and monitoring habitat restoration sites at Miramontes Ridge and Sierra Azul. DES students would also be involved in an ongoing, collaborative project entitled Global Views: Improving Understanding of Environmental Issues Through Peer Learning, which brings together students from different parts of the country to share their environmental research topics on a student-produced website. This project would also provide students with networking opportunities with high-level Bay Area professionals and increase students' experience in data collection and analysis, an often-challenging step in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) education that propels students to higher level learning. This project would contribute to data collected over multiple years, so students understand how their work is part of a larger contribution to science.

Vida Verde Nature Education**Funding priority: Access, interpretation, and education****Request amount: \$50,000****Score: 80%**

Vida Verde would serve approximately 750 4th-6th grade students through their Core School Year Program (Core Program) each school year and approximately 45 teens and their families through their Teen and Family Program. The Core Program consists of three-day, overnight camping trips that take place at their 100-acre site and farm, as well as nearby parks and beaches. During the camping trips, students gain meaningful outdoor experience through hands-on activities which ultimately positively impact students' academic performance, social and emotional learning, as well as their connection to the outdoors. The Teen and Family Program begins with a full week camping program called the Summer Leadership Program, which provides another layer of learning and outdoor education experiences to help teens grow into informed, confident leaders and environmental advocates. Most teens who participate in the Teen and Family

Program originally participated in the Core Program in elementary school. Teens are invited to participate in the Summer Leadership Program summer after summer to help lead and share knowledge. Vida Verde would also host monthly weekend hike and occasional family events for youth and their families. Vida Verde serves students from throughout the Bay Area with both programs, 99% of which are youth of color, and 85% qualify for free/reduced-price lunch programs in their schools. Partnerships include schools, teachers and administrators throughout the Bay Area. Thirty percent of the 40 schools served by Vida Verde have sent/are sending students for seven or more consecutive years (several for over 12 years). Another 33% have sent students for 3-6 consecutive years.

UC Elkus Ranch**Funding priority: Access, interpretation, and education****Request amount: \$17,250****Score: 80%**

UC Elkus Ranch would offer a variety of educational programs for youth from preschool through high school. Program elements include field study visits, overnight visits, summer and winter day camps, and opportunities for community service. Program content includes food and fiber productions, plant biology, pollinators and gardens, livestock husbandry, nutrition and environmental stewardship. UC Elkus Ranch serves nearly 8,000 children from Bay Area school and youth groups each year, many of which have special needs including economic disadvantage, physical, emotional and learning disabilities, limited English language skills, and at-risk behavior. To make their programs accessible and equitable, UC Elkus Ranch offers waived program fees to approximately 10-15% of participants who attend schools serving low-income populations. This proposed project would provide funding for approximately 1,250 youth to attend fee-free over a three-year period through staff funding support. This opportunity would be made available to qualifying schools with 50% or greater free-and-reduced lunches and any qualifying special education school. Elkus Ranch is home base to other existing programs operated by the University of California Cooperative Extension, a fundamentally strong partnership between the UC, the County of San Mateo, and the state. The ranch hosts the following internal partnerships: 4-H, UC Master Gardeners, UC Master Food Preservers, and CalFresh Healthy Living, UCCE. These partnerships regularly lead to program improvement, magnified impact, and synergy between projects at the ranch for the increased benefit of youth and families. Our CalFresh Healthy Living program currently provides nutrition education primarily to this target group as well as our Healthy Living Ambassadors program.

Peninsula Open Space Trust**Funding priority: Access, interpretation, and education****Request amount: \$25,000****Score: 79%**

Peninsula Open Space Trust (POST) would conduct the San Mateo Coastal Trail Feasibility Study (Study) by assessing viable options to create a contiguous California Coastal Trail (CCT) in San Mateo County. Approximately 30 miles of established CCT are open to the public currently. Remaining gaps contain challenging segments due to constraints like privately owned lands, prime agricultural lands, and complex terrain. Through other County-led planning efforts, the community has expressed need and support for connecting the CCT to improve accessibility to coastal cities, jobs and recreational opportunities. The Study would evaluate key segments with the CCT planning area and enable a connected CCT in the County by 1) assessing existing conditions; 2) analyzing opportunities and constraints; 3) conducting stakeholder engagement; 4) preparing planning level conceptual designs in select segments; and 5) guiding Caltrans, the County and project partners to select and prioritize segments for future phases of detailed planning and implementation. The study would prioritize outcomes that address equity concerns for local disadvantaged communities. Connecting the CCT gaps and linking it to existing and planned regional trails supports local, regional and statewide initiatives to develop non-motorized transportation alternatives and enhance connectivity between communities.

Additional Proposals (not recommended)**San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory****Funding priority: Applied science****Request amount: \$28,880****Score: 84%**

Wintering burrowing owls in the Santa Cruz Mountains may be limited by the lack of suitable burrows. San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory (SFBBO) would test that idea by creating simple artificial burrows across a range of District preserves and monitoring the burrows to determine if and how many owls use them. By manipulating the resource, in this case by creating more burrows, SFBBO would determine if a simple management practice can be used to provide additional habitat to support a sensitive species.

Summit Public Schools**Funding priority: Access, interpretation, and education****Request amount: \$12,000****Score: 78%**

Summit Public Schools seeks transportation funding for approximately 190 students high school students from four Summit Public Schools in the South Bay to experience visit District preserves

at least twice a semester for two semesters. Funding would support bus rentals to transport students taking outdoor education and botany classes to engage in hands-on experiential learning.

Groundswell Coastal Ecology**Funding priority: Access, interpretation, and education****Request amount: \$49,625****Score: 74%**

Groundswell Coastal Ecology (Groundswell) would work with students at Pescadero High and Middle Schools to engage in building resilient coasts. This project would focus on 5 small-scale environmental enhancement projects at high use access points in San Mateo County, such as the new Tunitas Creek County Park. Working with land managers, Groundswell would identify, map, perform a needs assessment, and prioritization of twenty high-use regional coastal and semi-coastal sites in Western San Mateo County that would benefit from enhancement actions and rank sites based on specific attributes. For the top-ranking sites, Groundswell would develop restoration/enhancement plans for small scale projects conducive to student and volunteer engagement. Students would have the opportunity to participate in hands-on activities.

Ridge Trail Council**Funding priority: Access, interpretation, and education****Request amount: \$24,878.50****Score: 74%**

Ridge Trail Council (Ridge Trail) proposes guided hikes at La Honda Creek Preserve through their Very Important Trail Access Program to expand public trail access and grow public support for recreation at the preserve. The Ridge Trail periodically hosts VIT outings around the Bay Area on trails with restricted or managed access to provide the public with a special outdoor experience where they otherwise may not be able to go. The audiences for these outings are usually Ridge Trail members and supporters, so this VIT Access program at Upper La Honda would be an opportunity to expand the reach of this program to historically underrepresented communities. This series of four fully supported trail outings at Upper La Honda for youth and families would be in partnership with Siena Youth Center at St Francis Center, a Redwood City nonprofit who serves struggling and working poor families. The 3.5-to-5-mile nature-based experience would introduce regional residents to the hiking trails at Upper La Honda, which currently require special permits. Working with these community partner organizations, the Ridge Trail would offer a series of fully supported, guided trail outings to individuals and families who have been historically underrepresented to introduce participants to hiking, guide the exploration of local flora/fauna and provide an overview of the area's preservation efforts.

Greenbelt Alliance**Funding priority: Network and partnership support****Request amount: \$50,000****Score: 74%**

Greenbelt Alliance would catalyze meetings with environmental partners regarding the reimagining of the Priority Conservation Area (PCA) program in coordination with the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC). PCAs are locations designated for the protection of natural habitats and the preservation of open space for future generations. MTC initially established PCA grants as a conservation component of the One Bay Area Grant program in order to help local agencies acquire or enhance properties designated PCAs. As part of MTC's Plan Bay Area 2050, Greenbelt Alliance, along with other environmental partners throughout the region, has advocated for increased funding for and protection of open spaces for climate resilience, ecological conservation and public access benefits. This group, the Environmental Stakeholders Coalition, advocated for the inclusion of a PCA program revamp in Plan Bay Area 2050 as one of its top priorities for this Plan Bay Area cycle.

Point Blue Conservation**Funding priority: Network and partnership support****Request amount: \$48,462****Score: 72%**

Using an innovative collaborative approach, Point Blue and partners would engage stakeholders and community members in co-creating a strategic business plan, education curriculum, and career-development opportunities for the establishment of a local, equitable, accessible, and culturally inclusive native plant nursery to serve Santa Clara County watersheds and community members and increase climate resilience throughout the region.

Thrive Alliance**Funding priority: Network and partnership support****Request amount: \$50,000****Score: 67%**

Thrive Alliance (Thrive) would utilize grant funds to continue their monthly Environment & Sustainability Thrive Action Group (TAG) meetings where organizations from across San Mateo County convene to learn, collaborate and act. Thrive's programs are based on bringing together organizations to be stronger together by facilitating and encouraging communication and collaboration and building cross-sector relationships. In addition, Thrive would host an Annual Sustainability and Environmental Justice Summit to develop shared priorities and strengthen the capacity of the environmental community in San Mateo County. The Summit allows us to leverage the collaboration and partnerships already established through our Thrive Environment & Sustainability TAG work.

FY22 Grantmaking Program Proposals					
Recommended Organization	Funding Priority	Total Request	Recommended Award	Average Score	
Coastside Land Trust	Access, interpretation and education	\$ 25,000.00	\$ 25,000.00	93%	
Dominican University of California	Applied science	\$ 25,000.00	\$ 25,000.00	88%	
Saved by Nature	Access, interpretation and education	\$ 24,783.00	\$ 24,783.00	84%	
San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory	Access, interpretation and education	\$ 24,980.00	\$ 24,980.00	83%	
Creeside Science	Applied science	\$ 50,000.00	\$ 50,000.00	83%	
San Jose State University	Applied science	\$ 49,964.00	\$ 49,964.00	82%	
Pie Ranch	Access, interpretation and education	\$ 50,000.00	\$ 50,000.00	81%	
Vida Verde Nature Education	Access, interpretation and education	\$ 50,000.00	\$ 50,000.00	80%	
UC Elkus Ranch	Access, interpretation and education	\$ 17,250.00	\$ 17,250.00	80%	
Peninsula Open Space Trust	Access, interpretation and education	\$ 25,000.00	\$ 25,000.00	79%	
Total		\$ 341,977.00	\$ 341,977.00		
Additional Received Proposals	Funding Priority	Total Request	Recommended Award	Average Score	
San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory	Applied science	\$ 28,880.00	N/A	84%	
Summit Public Schools	Access, interpretation and education	\$ 12,000.00	N/A	78%	
Greenbelt Alliance	Network and partnership support	\$ 50,000.00	N/A	74%	
Groundswell Ecology	Access, interpretation and education	\$ 49,625.00	N/A	74%	
Ridge Trail Council	Access, interpretation and education	\$ 24,878.50	N/A	74%	
Point Blue Conservation	Network and partnership support	\$ 48,462.00	N/A	72%	
Thrive Alliance	Network and partnership support	\$ 50,000.00	N/A	67%	
Total		\$ 263,845.50			