



**Pacific Southwest Research Station  
U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service**

*Pacific Southwest Research Station*

With funding through the Southern Nevada Public  
Lands Management Act  
Announces



**A Request for Proposals (RFP) to Conduct  
Research in Support of the  
Lake Tahoe Restoration Act and the  
Lake Tahoe Environmental Improvement  
Program**



**Opening September 2, 2008  
Closing October 23, 2008 at 4:30 p.m.**

**Notice: There are significant changes in the requirements for proposals from last year. *Please read the RFP carefully.***

This RFP seeks projects to address the following subthemes within the Lake Tahoe basin:

| <b>Theme</b>                               | <b>Subtheme</b>  |
|--|--|
| 1) Effects of Wildfire and Fuel Treatments | 1a) Evaluating alternatives for fuel treatments  |
|  | 1b) Impacts of wildfire  |
| 2) Water Quality                           | 2a) Effectiveness of urban and roadway BMPs in removing fine sediment from stormwater runoff |
|  | 2b) Sources, characterization and transport of fine particles from urban land uses           |
|  | 2c) Ability of large areas with natural vegetation to treat surface runoff                   |
| 3) Air Quality                             | 3a) Gaseous pollutants   |
|  | 3b) Particle deposition  |
| 4) Watershed Restoration                   | 4a) Stream channel and meadow restoration  |
|  | 4b) Wildlife and habitat restoration   |
|  | 4c) Invasive species   |
| 5) Climate Change                          | 5a) Managing for climate change  |

## A. Proposal Submission

Proposals must be received by **October 23, 2008 at 4:30 p.m.** There will be no exceptions to this closing date.

- **Proposals must be complete and follow the formatting requirements set forth in this RFP.**
- **The proposal must clearly state the primary subtheme addressed. Proposals will be evaluated in the context of the subtheme.**

**PROPOSALS THAT DO NOT FOLLOW THESE GUIDELINES WILL NOT BE CONSIDERED FOR FUNDING AND WILL NOT BE SUBMITTED FOR PEER REVIEW.**

You can apply via the [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) website OR you can submit an electronic (PDF) file containing all required documents via e-mail or on a compact disk mailed to:

Jonathan W. Long  
Biologist/Tahoe Science Program Coordinator  
Pacific Southwest Research Station  
Tahoe Environmental Research Center, 3rd Floor  
291 Country Club Drive  
Incline Village, NV 89451  
(775) 881-7560 x. 7482  
JWLONG@FS.FED.US

An email confirmation of submission will be sent to the primary author within one week of receipt.

Any questions should be directed to Jonathan Long at the above address.

### *Important Reminders*

#### **1) Proposals must be submitted in electronic format!**

- Proposals can be submitted via e-mail or CD in PDF (Portable Document Format). You can create a PDF document using Adobe Acrobat software or using free, open source software such as PDF Creator Portable Document File (PDF)!
- Proposals submitted via e-mail should be no larger than 2 MB. If your total package is larger than 2 MB, you can submit the proposal by mail on a CD. **Proposals that do not meet these guidelines will not be reviewed.**
- Proposals can also be submitted through the [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) website. To use this route, you must complete several additional steps including submitting a SF-424 form (see Section E of this RFP).

#### **2) Review policies on indirect costs and funding instruments (see page 10)!**

## **B. Background and Expectations for Proposals**

### *Purpose and Needs*

The Pacific Southwest Research Station, USDA Forest Service (PSW) is seeking proposals as part of the Tahoe Science Program funded by the Southern Nevada Public Lands Management Act (SNPLMA). The purpose of the Tahoe Science Program is to provide high quality science to effectively meet environmental goals in the Tahoe Basin, as mandated in the **Lake Tahoe Restoration Act of 2000**. The commitment to the maintenance and restoration of Lake Tahoe for future generations has been put into action through a multi-agency initiative known as the Environmental Improvement Program (EIP). Launched in conjunction with the 1997 Lake Tahoe Presidential Forum, the EIP provides a strategy to achieve the environmental goals for the Lake Tahoe basin. The strategy builds on the capital improvement approaches that have been underway within the region for over two decades. This strategy is designed to accomplish, maintain or exceed multiple environmental goals and develop a more integrated, proactive approach to environmental management. The environmental goals of the Lake Tahoe Region are defined using thresholds, which are standards established to protect the natural environment and to maintain public health and safety within the region. The nine threshold categories are: 1) water quality, 2) wildlife, 3) soil conservation, 4) scenic resources, 5) air quality, 6) recreation, 7) vegetation, 8) noise, and 9) fisheries. For more information about the Lake Tahoe EIP and associated thresholds please visit <http://www.trpa.org/default.aspx?tabindex=10&tabid=227>

Scientific research has played a key role at Lake Tahoe in developing environmental thresholds, identifying trends in threshold attainment, and informing policy decisions. **The Lake Tahoe Restoration Act** calls for the best available science to prioritize and evaluate efforts to meet those environmental thresholds. Therefore, research projects funded through this program need to help answer the most pressing management questions facing land managers and regulatory agencies in the Lake Tahoe basin and to promote more effective environmental improvement projects. Great strides have been made in recent years to ensure that scientific research is applicable to agency goals.

Pressing science information needs are currently described in the draft Science Plan for the Tahoe Basin (available at <http://www.tahoescience.org/>). Guided by this plan, the Tahoe Science Consortium (TSC), State, Federal, and Local government representatives have collaboratively chosen five major science themes and associated sub-themes in response to needs expressed by the management and policy officials within the basin. These themes are intended to address evolving research needs in the basin. Project proponents should consult the draft Science Plan to ensure that their proposed research directly addresses needs that are current and specific to the Tahoe Basin.

A Science update report documenting recent and ongoing science efforts is available at the TSC website and the PSW Tahoe Science Program website (<http://www.fs.fed.us/psw/partnerships/tahoescience/>). The report summarizes current interests of management agencies in relation to the Round 9 subthemes. It also lists recent relevant publications and contact information for agency representatives who can identify current science priorities for management agencies within the basin.

## ***Expectations for All Proposals***

**Produce meaningful results within set timeframes:** Proposal budgets should be capable of supporting the project for its entire duration. If a proposed project spans more than one year, funding for all years should be requested in the initial proposal. Proposed projects should extend no more than 3 years, with an expected start date no earlier than June 2009 (the actual start date is subject to change). All projects must be capable of producing meaningful scientific results given the funding provided. Follow-up projects will have to compete for additional funding in subsequent rounds.

**Explain relationships between the proposed research and previous relevant research, monitoring, and environmental improvement efforts.** Proponents should review the Tahoe Science Plan and the PSW Tahoe Science Program Web site, including the Science Update Report and related documents to make sure that they have considered previous and current research projects. Proposals should leverage existing datasets, models, model elements, and other efforts to the extent possible. Existing data can be analyzed and synthesized to further understand environmental processes, conditions and trends; in particular, these analyses should aim to extract possibly unknown, yet critical, information from existing data sets. Proposals seeking to build new models or refine existing ones should explain how they expand upon or depart from relevant models, monitoring, or other research projects that have been or are being developed. Proponents are advised to explain how their results could be used to evaluate environmental improvement efforts in the basin.

**Engage management entities and other stakeholders:** Proposals should include provisions to ensure that relevant stakeholders in the Lake Tahoe basin will be engaged early and throughout the project. Proponents are encouraged to contact agency representatives during the preparation of their proposals (several agency representatives are identified in the Science Update Report). **Do not include recommendation letters in the proposal. However, proponents should discuss how the proposal was designed to respond to agency needs.** Proponents should plan to engage with representatives of management agencies in the basin to discuss how research outputs can be designed to improve management.

**Facilitate reporting to managers and the public:** PSW expects to work with each successful project to share their findings with managers, other researchers, and the public in the Lake Tahoe basin. Successful applicants will be expected to provide information regarding their projects to facilitate understanding of their objectives and progress. Each funded project will be featured on the PSW website including the proposal, summary, photos, and update reports. Applicants can identify and request redaction of portions of their proposal that contain confidential or proprietary information which they do not want to be published.

**Proposals should consider these expectations in their deliverables, budgets, and timetables.**

## **C. Science Themes and Funding Allocations**

PSW is requesting that interested researchers submit proposals for funding within the five science theme areas listed below. The order of subthemes within the themes does not reflect priorities. A total of \$3.75 million has been identified for science activities in this round of funding. However, 10% of this funding (\$375,000) will support established science programs through the TSC. Each theme has a target level of funding indicated below. A small portion of each theme's target funding level will be reserved, to cover PSW support costs for the entire program. Funding levels for each theme may vary somewhat from targeted levels depending on the proposals received and the amount requested by theme.

### ***Theme 1: Effects of Wildfire and Fuel Treatments: \$1,150,000***

#### **Subtheme: Evaluating alternatives for fuel treatments**

Forest fuel treatments in the basin have been constrained by high costs, by limited access and long hauling distances for slash disposal, and by constraints on burning. Managers need more in-depth and complete information to fully evaluate both cost effectiveness and ecological effects of different alternatives.

Research should evaluate and compare options for fuel treatments, including slash disposal. Evaluations should be based on economic research and/or ecological effects. Ecological effects of particular interest include quantifying the impacts of reducing fuel loads on:

- a) changes in fire regime/hazard/behavior,
- b) water quality,
- c) soil quality,
- d) wildlife,
- e) air quality, and/or
- f) spread of exotic plants or insect pests.

Proposals that consider special conditions involving Stream Environment Zones (SEZs), steeply sloped areas, and urban areas are encouraged. Development of standardized monitoring protocols to evaluate effectiveness is also of special interest. Economic research should aim to quantify cost-effectiveness of alternative fuel treatment methods and biomass disposal/processing techniques.

#### **Subtheme: Impacts of wildfire**

Wildfire is a primary disturbance force in the majority of conifer forest types in the Lake Tahoe basin. Research is needed to evaluate how varying levels of wildfire severity and extent impact biological communities, soils, and water quality, as well as how rehabilitation/restoration efforts can mitigate those impacts.

Research should focus on assessing, understanding and predicting the effects of wildfire in the Lake Tahoe basin on:

- a) forest structure/composition,
- b) wildlife habitat, species distribution and diversity, and/or
- c) soil and water quality.

Research projects can also evaluate the effectiveness of rehabilitation/restoration efforts to mitigate impacts of wildfires on soils and water quality at Lake Tahoe.

### ***Theme 2: Water Quality (Target of \$900,000)***

#### **Subtheme: Effectiveness of urban and roadway BMPs in removing fine sediment from stormwater runoff**

Current scientific understanding is that very fine soil particles (less than 20  $\mu\text{m}$  in diameter) have a significant influence on lake clarity. Regulatory and implementing agencies require a much more detailed understanding of fine sediment removal effectiveness in order to track progress towards regulatory targets. Basin agencies are developing a Pollutant Load Reduction Model (PLRM) to quantify water quality improvement since monitoring each individual BMP project is infeasible. Further research is needed for development, calibration and validation of the PLRM.

What is the effectiveness of current and proposed BMPs in removing fine sediments from urban stormwater drainage? To the extent possible, research should:

- a) focus on all BMPs that treat urban runoff, including those on primary and secondary roads;
- b) evaluate removal effectiveness for particles  $<63 \mu\text{m}$  in diameter while focusing on those  $<20 \mu\text{m}$ ;
- c) express load measurements as both weight and particle numbers;
- d) emphasize direct monitoring using accepted methodologies applied in the Tahoe Basin;
- e) monitor year-round across the major hydrologic seasons;
- f) select BMPs that are representative of the Tahoe Basin as a whole (i.e. not compliance monitoring for individual projects);
- g) generate results for development, calibration and validation of PLRM;
- h) use a statistical design to minimize uncertainty; and
- i) integrate results into agency efforts to track progress towards meeting regulatory targets for pollutant reduction.

#### **Subtheme: Sources, characterization and transport of fine particles from urban land uses**

The Lake Tahoe TMDL Technical Report and Pollutant Reduction Opportunity (PRO) Report stress the influence of fine sediment loading from urban zones on water clarity. Since the major load reduction opportunities are associated with urban land uses, it is important that basin agencies have a more detailed understanding of how very fine particles ( $<20 \mu\text{m}$  in diameter) are created, a more spatially resolved understanding of the relationship between particle generation and specific land uses, and more detailed knowledge on how these particles are transported from the urban zones to the lake. This sub-theme builds upon previous studies that were too broad and too short to resolve these issues. This research is vital for development, calibration and validation

of the Pollutant Load Reduction Model (PLRM).

Primary questions under this sub-theme are:

- 1) How does fine particle generation relate to urban land uses/features (including, but not limited to, impervious coverage, single family/multiple family residences, commercial development, parking lots, construction sites, roads and shoulders, driveways, curbs and gutters)?
- 2) How do natural processes and human activities contribute to fine particle formation?
- 3) How are fine particles transported to the lake through the urban drainage network?

Research should:

- a) quantify loads in terms of weight and numbers of fine (<63  $\mu\text{m}$ ) and very fine (<20  $\mu\text{m}$ ) particles;
- b) calculate the probability of particle delivery from urban stormwater to the lake;
- c) evaluate effects of snowmelt and snow management on particle movement;
- d) examine how geology, soil types, and natural erosion processes relate to fine particle generation; and/or
- e) examine contributions from road sand abrasion and soil along road shoulders.

Field monitoring should be conducted year-round across hydrologic seasons, using accepted methodologies for the basin and a statistical design to minimize uncertainty. Results should help refine, calibrate and validate the PLRM and prioritize projects to meet regulatory targets.

### **Subtheme: Ability of large areas with natural vegetation to treat surface runoff resulting from flood flows, gravity flow or mechanical pumping**

Urbanization has effectively de-coupled surface runoff from areas of infiltration and treatment. Naturally vegetated areas can be effective in removing fine sediments and other pollutants from urban stormwater under some conditions, but less so under others. The Lake Tahoe TMDL Pollutant Reduction Opportunity (PRO) Report strongly suggests considering all promising and/or innovative treatment approaches. However, current understanding is insufficient and we are unable to quantify the benefits from either pumping and infiltrating onto large parcels of natural lands, or from projects where stream channels are restored and storm water is able to move onto natural floodplains.

What is the feasibility of using large, naturally vegetated areas to remove fine sediments and nutrients from urban runoff and stream flow? Studies can address the following topics or others as determined appropriate by the respondent:

- a) development of statistical and modeling approaches to quantify pollutant removal,
- b) evaluate ability of soils and natural vegetation to treat storm water and retain pollutants over many decades,
- c) evaluate the regional potential for implementation of engineered storm water treatment systems and quantify load reductions for nitrogen, phosphorus and fine particles, and
- d) evaluate environmental impacts to community ecology and biodiversity if natural vegetated areas were used for stormwater treatment.

### ***Theme 3: Air Quality (Target of \$500,000)***

#### **Subtheme: Gaseous Pollutants**

Ozone levels in the basin continue to increase, leading to exceedances of the current air quality standard. Within Basin Ozone trends differ from regional trends and measurement studies have found minimal transport to the basin, suggesting in-basin activities are the source of these increases. In order to develop effective management strategies to mitigate this problem, there is a need to perform measurement and modeling studies.

Research is needed in the following areas:

- a) assessment of the causes of elevated ozone,
- b) ambient concentrations and sources of ozone forming precursors,
- c) determination of the sources of ozone forming precursors (e.g., various kinds of mobile sources and biogenic emissions), or
- d) strategies to reduce ambient ozone levels.

#### **Subtheme: Particle Deposition**

Dry deposition of particulate matter (PM) can lead to increased sediment levels in the lake. Many of the control strategies designed to limit this impact of are based on the reduction of Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) in the basin; however, the effects of changing VMT on PM deposition and flux are highly uncertain. The end result of these studies would be a more accurate estimate of the impact of VMT on the flux of PM to the lake.

Building upon previous and current studies of soil resuspension emission factors and particulate matter (PM) source apportionment, research is needed to quantify the relationships of Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) and vehicle class to PM loading to the lake.

### ***Theme 4: Watershed Restoration (Target of \$525,000)***

#### **Subtheme: Stream Channel and Meadow Restoration**

Meadows and streams are sensitive to disturbance and a number of these in the Tahoe Basin are priorities for restoration, as noted in the EIP now under development, both for reducing fine sediment loading to Lake Tahoe and for improvement of other ecosystem functions. Restoration treatments need to be evaluated to determine the strengths and weaknesses of different approaches. Key processes, including sediment and nutrient transport, need to be quantitatively assessed to determine the relative efficacy of restoration treatments.

Research should evaluate the effectiveness of SEZ, stream and/or meadow restoration projects in minimizing downstream delivery of important pollutants (e.g., fine sediment or nutrients) and other ecological services. Of particular interest are projects that:

- a) evaluate the ecological and/or economic costs and benefits of stream/meadow restoration in urban areas or other areas facing special constraints due to infrastructure, and/or
- b) evaluate which indicators and thresholds of riparian function are most important for monitoring and evaluating project success.



### **Subtheme: Wildlife and Habitat Restoration**

The Lake Tahoe basin has several distinct aquatic habitats or ecological conditions that support wildlife and plant species of special concern, including Tahoe yellow cress habitat, Lahontan cutthroat trout streams, and aspen stands. Ongoing multi-agency restoration efforts include the Tahoe Yellow Cress Conservation Strategy, the Lahontan Cutthroat Trout Reintroduction, and the Aspen Community Restoration Project. These adaptive management efforts need applied research to guide them, to evaluate treatments, and to establish parameters that indicate successful restoration.

How do species and/or habitats of special concern, in particular, Tahoe yellow cress, Lahontan cutthroat trout, or aspen communities, respond to restoration efforts? Research is required to determine the key activities needed to restore degraded habitats. Studies should compare alternative restoration approaches based upon ecosystem or species responses relative to appropriate reference conditions, and they should provide information to improve ongoing management efforts.

### **Subtheme: Invasive Species**

Management agencies in the Tahoe Basin have policies to prevent and control the spread of invasive species. More research is needed to guide decisions about the strategies and methods to limit the spread of invasive non-native species and to prevent new invasions.

Research should:

- a) evaluate approaches (including existing regulations) to control the spread of priority invasive non-native species or prevent the introduction of new invasive species,
- b) assess the habitat suitability of Lake Tahoe and its watershed to support the establishment of invasive mollusks, including New Zealand mud snail (*Potamopyrgus antipodarum*), quagga mussels (*Dreissena rostriformis bugensis*) or zebra mussels (*Dreissena polymorpha*), and/or
- c) better quantify risk assessment techniques and assumptions.

## ***Theme 5: Climate Change (Target of \$300,000)***

### **Subtheme: Managing for climate change**

Changes in vegetation distribution, air and lake temperature regimes, and precipitation patterns have been documented in the Sierra Nevada. These changes are expected to continue and will require managers to modify restoration strategies related to storm water management, fuel treatments and forest management prescriptions, and habitat restoration projects. New information and tools are needed to help agency managers better plan for climate change.

Research should aim to better inform managers of the implications of climate change for: a) forest management activities including fuel treatments, habitat restoration, revegetation, and control of invasive species; b) fire behavior and wildfire potential, c) requirements for effective defensible space, or d) the ability of stormwater management practices such as BMP, drainage control, and erosion control to diminish sediment and nutrient transport to Lake Tahoe.

## D. Proposal Format and Content Requirements

The proposal must specify methodologies, deliverables, and strategies for interacting with management agencies in sufficient detail to allow an informed reader to assess the proposal's validity in addressing the science subthemes. Each proposal narrative should begin with a 1 paragraph abstract explaining the scope of the project. Note that the title of each proposal received will be published. Applicants should identify portions of their proposal that contain confidential or proprietary information that they do not want made public.

The proposal narrative is limited to seven pages. Up to six figures may be included in the proposal to explain important project elements. Curriculum Vitae must be no longer than two pages per investigator. Proposals must use at least 10-point font and 1" margins.

**Quarterly Reporting.** To comply with the requirements of the SNPLMA program, all funded projects are required to submit updates on a **quarterly basis, by the 1st of July, October, January, and April.** Proposals should account for these quarterly reports in their timelines.

**Indirect Costs.** PSW intends to provide for as much on-the-ground science as possible with the limited amount of dollars available. Accordingly, applicants are encouraged to minimize indirect costs to the extent possible. All awardees and subawardees seeking reimbursement of indirect costs will be required to ensure that their budgets comply with a current indirect cost rate determination issued by the cognizant audit agency. Copies of those indirect cost rate determinations will have to be provided prior to the award agreement being approved. For entities that do not have such determinations (e.g., some consulting firms), their budget should include details of proposed indirect costs, which must be reasonable, allocable, and allowable. If selected to receive an award, such entities will be required to submit written description of their indirect cost policy and documentation of past historical actual indirect cost rates with their award application.

**Funding Instruments.** PSW may use one of several different funding instruments for these projects, although Cooperative Agreements or Research Joint Venture Agreements are preferred as they provide for substantial interaction between Forest Service personnel and researchers in refining study plans and developing products. A grant may also be used if in the best interest of the Tahoe Science Program administered by PSW; however, Forest Service policy requires use of a Cooperative Agreement for assistance awards that substantially involve Forest Service personnel after the award has been made. **Under the terms of a Cooperative Agreement or a Research Joint Venture Agreement, cooperators have to contribute a cost share amounting to a minimum of 20% total project costs;** in addition, **State Cooperative institutions cannot be reimbursed for tuition remission and indirect costs.** All cooperators can meet cost share by contributing direct cost, indirect cost, or a combination of both. Applicants who cannot meet these requirements may still apply, but they are advised that cost-effectiveness of proposals will be considered as part of the review process. In addition, PSW reserves the right to negotiate all budget elements and to refuse proposals if they are not in the best interest of the Tahoe Science Program administered by PSW.

**Required Format:** All pages must have a **minimum of 10 point font size and 1” margins.**

| Item and Content  | Length/format   |
|---|---|
| <b>I. Title Page</b>  | <b>1 page</b>   |
| a. Project Title (the title of each proposal received will be published)  |   |
| b. Theme and sub-theme targeted by the proposal ( <b>choose only one subtheme</b> )   |   |
| c. Principal Investigator(s): name, institution, address, phone, fax, and email   |   |
| d. Grants contact person: name, phone, fax, and email   |   |
| e. Total funding requested  |   |
| f. Total cost share (value of financial and in-kind contributions)  |   |
| <b>II. Proposal Narrative</b>   | <b>Maximum of 7 pages, single-spaced (longer proposals will not be reviewed)</b>  |
| a. Project abstract (1 paragraph summary)   |   |
| b. Justification statement  |   |
| c. Concise background and problem statement   |   |
| d. Goals, objectives, and hypotheses to be tested   |   |
| e. Approach, methodology and location of research   |   |
| f. Relationship of the research to previous relevant research, monitoring, and/or environmental improvement efforts   |   |
| g. Strategy for engaging with managers  |   |
| h. Description of deliverables/products   |   |
| <b>III. Schedule of major milestones/deliverables in a table with estimated start and end dates</b> (note that progress reports are required each quarter)  | <b>1 page</b>   |
| <b>IV. References</b>   | <b>1-2 pages</b>  |
| <b>V. Figures</b> (optional) for project locations, schematics, sample model outputs, etc. (Note that any figures included within the narrative will be counted as part of the page limit for the project narrative). | <b>Up to 6 figures</b>  |
| <b>VI. Budget (Requested and contributed funds)</b>   | Provide overall budget with cost breakdowns for each project year, detailed budgets for all subawards or contracts, and narrative justification as needed to explain all project costs. |
| a. Personnel: salaries for PI(s), associates, students, technicians, etc.   |   |
| b. Fringe Benefits  |   |
| c. Travel (domestic and international travel must be listed separately)   |   |
| d. Equipment (provide an itemized list all items when total costs exceed \$5,000; purchase of nonexpendable equipment above \$5,000 is strongly discouraged; leasing will be considered for equipment over \$5,000)   |   |
| e. Supplies (provide itemized list of all items when total costs exceed \$5,000)  |   |
| f. Contractual  |   |
| h. Other  |   |
| i. Total Direct Costs   |   |
| j. Indirect Costs (see page 10) All indirect costs must be shown as a separate line item. Do not add indirect costs to any of the direct costs items listed above.  |   |
| k. Total Budget Requested and Contributed   |   |
| <b>VII. Abbreviated CV(s)</b> for investigator(s) (summarizing qualifications that are most relevant to the research proposal)  | <b>Up to 2 pages each</b>   |

**Notes on Budget Requirements:** Budgets should conform to the format of Standard Form 424 (see [http://www.grants.gov/agencies/aapproved\\_standard\\_forms.jsp](http://www.grants.gov/agencies/aapproved_standard_forms.jsp) ). Equipment is non-expendable, tangible personal property with a unit cost of \$5,000 or more and has a useful life of more than one year. Items that do not meet the definition of Equipment can be included in Supplies.

**Permits.** Where necessary or anticipated, applicants should provide documentation to demonstrate that they have or will be obtaining state and federal regulatory permits, and private-landowner written approval to meet the needs of the proposal.

**Proposal Submission.** University researchers are advised to submit their proposals through their university's sponsored projects office.

## **E. Option for Applying through Grants.gov**

**Requirements for Applying through Grants.gov Website.** Applicants may file an electronic application at the [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) Website. If so, you must complete the steps below. Anyone who is awarded funding will eventually have to complete these steps (see Section G: Award Process); however, *you do not have to complete these steps now* if you apply directly through e-mail or mail.

- furnish a DUNS number obtained by contacting Dun and Bradstreet at 1-866-705-5711. A DUNS number will be provided quickly by telephone at no charge. A DUNS number can also be obtained on-line at [www.dnb.com](http://www.dnb.com)
- register in the Central Contractor Registry (CCR), by going to [www.ccr.gov](http://www.ccr.gov) and following the instructions provided on line, or by calling the CCR Assistance Center at 1-888-227-2423
- submit an SF-424 (Application for Federal Assistance) package
- furnish their tax identification number
- designate a financial institution or an authorized payment agent through which a federal payment may be made in accordance with US Treasury Regulations, Money and Finance at 31 CFR 208

**Instructions for Applying through Grants.gov website.** Grants.gov contains full instructions on all required passwords, credentialing, and software. Follow the instructions at Grants.gov for registering and submitting an electronic application. If a system problem or technical difficulty occurs with an electronic application, please use the customer support resources available at the Grants.gov website.

First time Grants.gov users should go to the "Get Started" tab on the Grants.gov site and carefully read and follow the steps listed. These steps need to be initiated early in the application process to avoid delays in submitting your application online. Registering with the Central Contractor Registry (CCR), will take some time to complete, so keep that in mind when beginning the application process. In order to register with the CCR, your organization will need a Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number. A DUNS number is a unique nine-character identification number provided by the commercial company, Dun and Bradstreet

(D&B). To investigate if your organization already has a DUNS number or to obtain a DUNS number, contact Dun and Bradstreet at 1-866-705-5711. Be sure to complete the Marketing Partner ID (MPIN) and Electronic Business Primary Point of Contact fields during the CCR registration process. These are mandatory fields that are required when submitting grant applications through Grants.gov. Information about registering with CCR was published in the Federal Register on January 17, 2006 (see 71 FR 2549).

The Grants.gov Website includes a blank application package. To access the opportunity, search for one or more of the following attributes:

Opportunity Number: USDA-FS-PSW-TAHOE-2008  
Opportunity Title: Tahoe Research Supported by SNPLMA Round 9.  
Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA): 10.652 (Forestry Research).

## F. Review Process

A full description of the process that will be used to evaluate the proposals, including criteria to determine technical quality and relevancy, is available at the PSW website ([www.fs.fed.us/psw/partnerships/tahoescience](http://www.fs.fed.us/psw/partnerships/tahoescience)) and at the Tahoe Science Consortium website ([http://www.tahoescience.org/peer\\_review/Default.aspx](http://www.tahoescience.org/peer_review/Default.aspx)).

**Compliance with RFP:** One or more representative(s) from the Peer Review Committee will work with representatives from the agency sponsoring the RFP to examine the submitted proposals to ensure they fulfill all requirements stated in the RFP. Only proposals fulfilling all RFP requirements will be distributed for external peer review.

**Peer Review:** Accepted proposals will be distributed to three independent scientists (not affiliated with the TSC or the project proponents) who will evaluate technical quality.

**Relevancy Review:** Members of the Tahoe Science Agency Coordination Committee who represent land management and regulatory agencies will assess relevancy.

**Synthesis:** The Peer Review Committee will synthesize results of the technical reviews and agency reviews to create a list of proposals recommended to the PSW for funding.

**Notification:** We anticipate notifying principal investigators about decisions regarding possible funding of their proposals by April 2009, although the schedule is contingent upon approval by the BLM. Anonymous peer review comments and relevancy review results will be distributed to the Principal Investigators of all proposals. Some projects may be identified as alternates to receive support should funds become available during the negotiation of awards.

## G. Award Process

The PSW reserves the right to negotiate scopes of work, budget amounts and deliverables with

proponents based upon feedback from the peer review process and to comply with Forest Service policies. Projects may be required to modify their proposed indirect cost rates and/or demonstrate cost share contributions.

**Project Start Dates: Projects should expect to begin no earlier than June 1, 2009.** Until the U.S. Department of Interior, Bureau of Land Management sends PSW notification that funding is approved and available, PSW cannot make awards. Project charges cannot be incurred prior to the award.

**Project Execution.** It is the responsibility of the project proponent to coordinate with appropriate agency representatives or partners and secure any agreements or approvals necessary prior to initiating research. If, for example, the research is proposed to be conducted on agency or private lands, the project proponent must secure all applicable approvals from the land manager/owner. If the research requires use of data collected by an agency, then the project proponent must secure approval to use this data. This prerequisite must be satisfied before receiving funding.

**Project Award Requirements.** Upon execution of a federal award, the recipient/cooperator will be requested to

- furnish a DUNS number obtained by contacting Dun and Bradstreet at 1-866-705-5711. A DUNS number will be provided quickly by telephone at no charge. A DUNS number can also be obtained on-line at [www.dnb.com](http://www.dnb.com)
- register in the Central Contractor Registry (CCR), by going to [www.ccr.gov](http://www.ccr.gov) and following the instructions provided on line, or by calling the CCR Assistance Center at 1-888-227-2423
- submit an SF-424 (Application for Federal Assistance) package
- furnish their tax identification number
- designate a financial institution or an authorized payment agent through which a federal payment may be made in accordance with US Treasury Regulations, Money and Finance at 31 CFR 208

Funding for these projects is not guaranteed and is subject to the availability of funds and the evaluation of proposals based on the criteria in this announcement. PSW reserves the right to partially fund proposals/applications by funding discrete activities, portions, or phases of proposed projects. If PSW decides to partially fund a proposal/application, it will do so in a manner that does not prejudice any applicants or affect the basis upon which the proposal/application, or portion thereof, was evaluated and selected for award, and that maintains the integrity of the competition and selection process. PSW reserves the right to make additional awards under this announcement (after the original award selections are made) if additional funding becomes available. Any additional selections for awards will be made no later than 6 months after the original selection decisions. The additional selections must be made in accordance with the terms of this announcement and PSW policy.