Guadalupe-Coyote Resource Conservation District (GCRCD)

Grant Program Policy

Approved by the Board of Directors on January 11, 2016

I. GENERAL PROVISIONS

Governance. The Board of Directors (“Board”) for the Guadalupe-Coyote Resource Conservation District (“District”) consists of five members (“Director”) of the Board. As the governing body of the District, the Board reviews and approves District policies. The Board may choose to delegate responsibility for policy administration to the District’s Executive Director (“ED”), including but not limited to the development of procedures and internal controls to implement the policy.

Purpose of the Policy. As part of its commitment to conservation of natural resources within the region, the District provides grants for outside projects and programs that assist the District in meeting its goals. This policy will guide the granting of funds in order to provide for a transparent and equitable process.

Policy Revisions. The Board reviews the bidding policy at least annually, preferably in conjunction with the review and adoption of the proposed budget. Any Director or the ED may make recommendations for changes to a policy at any time, but all policy changes require approval by the Board.

Statement of Non-Discrimination. The District contracts on a non-discriminatory basis, without regard to race, creed, color, national origin, ancestry, sexual orientation, political affiliation or beliefs, sex, age, physical handicap, medical condition, marital status or pregnancy (as those terms are defined by the California Fair Employment and Housing Act -- Government Code Section 12900-12996).

II. GRANT FUNDING

Grantee Eligibility. Eligible organizations are:

- Nonprofit organizations and educational institutions certified as tax exempt under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, and classified as “not a private foundation” under Section 509(a).
- Charitable organizations that do not have tax exempt status but have an eligible nonprofit organization serving as its fiscal sponsor. Organizations that have completed and filed Form 1023 but not yet received an IRS determination letter must use a fiscal sponsor until the IRS determines they qualify for nonprofit status.
- Government agencies.
Grant Limitations. The District does not fund individuals, fundraising activities; debt reduction; sectarian religious activities; political lobbying or legislative activities; or institutions that discriminate on the basis of race, ethnicity, creed, gender, or sexual orientation in policy or in practice.

Allocation of Funding. During the annual budget process, the Board will determine the maximum funding to be allocated to the grant program for the duration of the fiscal year; the number and timing of grant cycles, and how the allocation will be split between funding cycles. The Board is not precluded from revising the overall or cyclical funding allocation during the fiscal year based upon changing budget, program or other District requirements.

Project Eligibility. District-funded projects and programs must provide a benefit to District watersheds or constituents. The District awards grants in its program areas, as defined in its most current Long Range Plan. The District’s primary interests within these areas are:

- **Watersheds and Wildlife**: Programs that focus on collaborative efforts to provide cost efficient services and ecologically effective approaches to protecting the District’s watershed and wildlife resources.
- **Grazing and Grasslands**: Programs that focus on providing landowners, cattle ranchers, and open space managers with education and assistance in the conservation of healthy working grasslands in the District.
- **Crops and Communities**: Programs that promote productive agriculture while also conserving natural resources within the District.
- **Education and Outreach**: Programs that increase District constituents’ awareness of natural resource issues, and connect landowners and natural resource managers to technical expertise and sources of project funding.

Project Match. Applicants are allowed to use District grant funding to leverage additional funds from other agencies or foundations provided that the intent to use District funds as match is provided to the District for consideration in the grant process.

Maximum Grant Amount. The maximum grant amount is $5,000 per grantee, per fiscal year. The Board may waive the cap on a case-by-case basis based upon the merit of the proposed grant application.

III. GRANT PROCESS

Public Notice. Information regarding opening and closing dates for grant cycles shall be posted on the District website at the beginning of the fiscal year. The website shall also include links to the GCRCD Grant Program Policy and the application form to be used to apply for funding.

Applications. The ED shall be responsible for development and implementation of the grant program, including the creation of guidelines, forms and screening tools.

Screening. Each application will be screened for grantee and program eligibility.
• The ED shall screen the application for grantee eligibility. Those deemed eligible will move to the next step in the process. Those deemed ineligible will be returned to the applicant with a letter of explanation.

• If the grant is deemed eligible, the ED will designate screeners to review the application for program eligibility. Directors may serve as screeners provided that no more than two (2) Directors participate throughout any designated funding cycle. Associate Directors may also serve as screeners. Screeners will perform their review confidentially and without consultation with each other.

• Once program review is complete, the ED will compile the results and rank the grant applications by their scores, and prepare recommendations for grant funding for the Board to consider.

Board Review and Selection. The Board shall consider applications for grant funding at a regular or special Board meeting. Applicants will be notified of the Board date and time so they can attend the meeting. The Board will select the applicant(s) it believes is best suited to the goals of the District. The Board may reject any and all proposals received.

Appeal. Any applicant deemed ineligible by the ED during the initial screening process has the right to appeal that finding to the Board.

IV. GRANT AWARD

Funding Agreement. Grantees are required to enter into a funding agreement with the District as a condition of the grant award. The ED shall be responsible for developing the agreement’s scope of work to match the grant proposal, and shall be authorized to sign the agreement on behalf of the District. No funding shall be disbursed until a completed and signed funding agreement is in place.

Funding Advances. Funding shall be disbursed on a reimbursement basis. Unless specifically allowed by the Board’s motion, advances on grant funding are not allowed.

District Recognition. Grantees shall be required through their agreement with the District to provide recognition of the grant award on location, on marketing materials, on their website, and/or through their social media accounts, depending on the specific situation.

Reports. Grantees shall be required to file written reports of grant activities, as determined by the ED and in accordance with the terms of their agreement.

Amendments to the Agreement. The ED is authorized to make non-substantial changes to the scope of work, dates of completion, and/or line item detail of the budget. Requests for additional funding, advances, or substantial changes in scope of work from the original application shall require approval by the Board.
V. ADDITIONAL PROVISIONS

Public Information. For purposes of transparency and accountability, all successfully-awarded grants shall be posted on the District’s website, and include the name of the applicant, the purpose of the grant, and the dollar amount. Applications and their supporting documents shall be considered public documents, but individual screener sheets shall remain confidential.

Insurance Requirements. Insurance, bonding, and other requirements to protect the District from potential liability shall be set forth as appropriate for each grant award in the funding agreement.