



## SOUTH YUBA RIVER CITIZENS LEAGUE

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May 4, 2022

Desiree Belding CPPO, CPPB  
Nevada County Purchasing Division  
950 Maidu Ave.  
Nevada City, CA 95959

RE: Outdoor Visitor Safety Fund (RFA No. 154822)  
**South Yuba River Wild & Scenic Trail Marker and Safety Signage Project**

Dear Ms. Belding:

The South Yuba River Citizens League (SYRCL) is pleased to submit its application for its South Yuba River Wild & Scenic Trail Marker and Safety Signage Project.

Enclosed are the following materials:

- The Application
- Budget Template
- Letter of Support from Nevada County Sheriff's Office
- SYRCL's Financial Documents -- CONFIDENTIAL
  - 990 Tax Returns FY20-21
  - SYRCL's FY20-21 audited financial statement

Should you have any questions or require additional information, please feel free to reach out to me or Julie Pokrandt, Development Director at [julie@yubariver.org](mailto:julie@yubariver.org).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Melinda Booth". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Melinda" and the last name "Booth" clearly distinguishable.

Melinda Booth  
Executive Director  
Office: 530-265-5961 x 202  
[melinda@yubariver.org](mailto:melinda@yubariver.org)

#### **8.4 TAB A: ENTITY DESCRIPTION** (approximately 500 words):

##### **a. Provide a brief description of your entity including mission, goals, and history in Nevada County.**

Headquartered in Nevada City, the South Yuba River Citizens League (SYRCL) is the leading advocate for water quality protection, river health, and watershed restoration within the Yuba Watershed. We formed in 1983 to prevent new dams being built on the South Yuba, a goal we reached in 1999. Nearly 40 years later, we are widely recognized as one of the most effective watershed groups in the United States.

**SYRCL's MISSION** is to unite the community to protect and restore the Yuba River watershed. Our awarding-winning watershed science program safeguards water quality and restores imperiled headwater meadows and riverbanks impacted by hydraulic mining. Our robust "River People program" mobilizes thousands of volunteers to protect our public lands and advocate for clean water and forest health. Our world-class environmental film festival – the Wild & Scenic Film Festival – reaches more than 100,000 audience members annually around the world, inspiring them to take action for a sustainable future.

##### **b. Provide the name(s) of the principal(s) responsible for the entities' organizational operations. Be sure to include their qualifications.**

Melinda Booth Executive Director, South Yuba River Citizens League, will administer this grant and oversee the work to ensure grant deliverables are met. Ms. Booth has served as SYRCL's executive director since 2017 and has worked for the organization since 2011. Under her tenure, the organization has grown to have a \$5 million annual operating budget that includes landscape-level conservation work in the lower Yuba River, the Yuba Headwaters, and the Yuba's Forests.

##### **c. Describe the community served by your entity.**

SYRCL strives to serve the Yuba watershed, which encompasses portions of Nevada, Yuba, Sierra and Placer counties. The preponderance of our work—restoration, forest health, education, community engagement—takes place in Nevada, Sierra, and Yuba counties.

**8.5 TAB B: COVID-19 IMPACTS (approximately 500 words):** *Note: Assessing whether a program or service “responds to” the COVID-19 public health emergency requires the recipient to, first, identify a need or negative impact of the COVID-19 public health emergency and, second, identify how the program, service, or other intervention addresses the identified need or impact.*

**a. Describe the economic harm your organization experienced because of the pandemic as it relates to the ARPA guidelines (see 6.0).**

Due to COVID-19, SYRCL cancelled fundraising events that supported education and public safety outreach in 2020, 2021, and 2022. Major funders withdrew education grants and national-level sponsors cancelled pledges for the Wild & Scenic Film Festival (WSFF). Fee-for-service revenue dropped, as dozens of organizations who franchise the WSFF cancelled contracts. Ticket sales dropped too. We lost hundreds of volunteer hours for critical tasks that staff were then required to perform. SYRCL had to adapt to the social distancing and stay-at-home advisories. This required investing in the following: laptops for telework; an online platform for the WSFF; staff time to develop safety protocols, monitor water quality, post safety signage at the river, and produce content for e-learning; vehicle expenses to ensure social distancing among field staff.

For our fiscal year 2021-2022 budget, we continue seeing reduced income from special events, ticket sales, and fee-for-service revenue, which impacts our ability to fund education, our college scholarship, outreach, volunteer, water quality, and fire safety programs.

**b. Described the impact of COVID-19 on your industry.**

SYRCL’s industry or “line of work” is protecting and restoring the Yuba River watershed which includes dealing with visitor impacts and safety issues surrounding the watershed. SYRCL is taking the lead to request relief and resources for a much-needed COVID response at the Yuba on behalf of several members of the Yuba River Safety Cohort. The relief and response we seek are improvements in services, facilities, and infrastructure that will help with visitor health & safety, emergency response, fire risk awareness, and stewardship education.

Public land managers estimate a 40% increase in visitation at the Yuba as a result of COVID-19. This situation is over-taxing personnel from county, state, and federal agencies. Local infrastructure is impacted, too: roads, parking, trails, waterways, bridges, etc. Data shows that most visitors are from out of the region and are often first-time visitors. This surge has highlighted the need to address the lack of infrastructure services, which exacerbates the negative social, environmental, safety, and community impacts from COVID-driven visitation.

Community members are distressed about this public health and safety situation and are coming to SYRCL. We are a focal point for this public outcry that something needs to be done to reduce the pressure on local services and the environment as well as improve conditions for the surge of visitors created by the pandemic.

**c. Described impact of COVID-19 related to your proposed project site(s).**

The South Yuba River canyon has over 45 miles of trails running down to the river and parallel along the river, transecting multiple public and private properties. Little to no signage or directional infrastructure exists along these trails. In 2020, the South Yuba River saw a major influx of first-time visitors venturing further up and down the river than ever before. Extremely limited cell service exists in these areas, making navigating to and from their intended destination more difficult for visitors accustomed to relying on their mobile devices for wayfinding purposes. When accidents occur along trails in the canyon, seldom do visitors know where they are or how to direct emergency responders to their location.

## **8.6 TAB C: PROJECT DESCRIPTION (approximately 500-1500 words):**

**a. Describe your project in detail including where it is located, and how it will promote community health, safety, and economy, protect the environment, and enhance resilience.**

### **South Yuba River Wild & Scenic Trail Marker and Safety Signage Project**

This project's objective is to create a mile marker system for trails in the South Yuba River Wild and Scenic corridor that 1) aids in wayfinding for visitors, 2) provides location markers for emergency rescue efforts, 3) informs trail users what properties they are entering and exiting, and 4) promotes the Wild and Scenic designation for 39 miles of the South Yuba River.

A joint-effort of SYRCL, State Parks, Bureau of Land Management (BLM), the US Forest Service (USFS) and Bear Yuba Land Trust (BYLT), this project proposes to install trail markers along most of the 39-mile Wild & Scenic stretch of the South Yuba River, approximately every ¼ to ½ mile, from Buttermilk Bend, near Englebright Dam, to the Town of Washington.

It is estimated that approximately 200 marker posts (such as 60-inch carsonite posts) are needed to cover the following areas:

- **California State Park Bridgeport** – ¼ Mile Trail Markers Needed: 25
- **Highway 49 Crossing** – ¼ Mile Trail Markers Needed: 36
- **South Yuba Trail – Edwards to Purdon Crossing** – ¼ Mile Trail Markers Needed: 23
- **South Yuba Trail – Washington to Edwards** – ¼ Mile Trail Markers Needed: 73
- **Ridge Trail** – Spaulding to Washington stretch of South Yuba Trail, – ¼ Mile Trail Markers Needed: 41

Also an additional 10 bilingual trailhead signs/maps would be posted in key locations. Information conveyed on signage includes directions and public/private land boundaries. There would also be information about recreating in the Wild & Scenic designated area.

This two-year project will occur in phases to accommodate the timelines of the various public agencies' permitting and approval processes. In addition to the major public agencies that own and manage land along the Yuba, private landowners are also essential stakeholders; time will be dedicated to involving them in this effort as well.

A critical component of this project will be engaging local safety groups through outreach and communications. This project is meant to help their work, so time will be spent to ensure they have the maps, information, and project updates so they are prepared when emergency calls start referencing the mile markers. Also, public engagement on this project will take place through social media, press releases, and dedicated webpages. The project will be promoted as a community asset with special emphasis on the scenic, environmental, and recreational values of this Wild & Scenic area.

Overall, the mile marker signage will enhance visitor safety and experience by creating situational and directional awareness and providing short-hand safety messaging. The project will aid safety personnel, such as Search & Rescue, during the summer in locating emergencies. It will help protect this state Wild & Scenic River which provides drinking and irrigation water for millions. It will also aid to reduce human impacts in the forested river canyons, where wildfire risk has increased due to climate change and drought.

**b. Please include basic timeline for project, including key milestones. Note: Funds must be obligated (i.e. under contract) by 12/31/24 and funds must be expended with all work performed and completed by 12/31/26.**

July 2022 – March 2023	Initiate project planning and permitting; Work plans assigned to partners Purchase marker posts and equipment Recruit volunteers & temporary staff; Secure prevailing wage determination Start signage designs, verbiage, and translations Begin outreach to private landowners Begin outreach to public safety groups
March – June 2023	Finalize BLM signage designs Begin Installation on BLM land Begin installations on some private lands Steward permitting process with USFS and State Parks Begin public communications (social media and PR); Website postings Deliver initial maps, resources, and progress report to public safety groups
July 2023 – March 2024	USFS and State Parks environmental permits secured Designs, verbiage, and translations approved by State Parks and USFS Continue communications and volunteer recruitment Monitor outcomes through surveys and emergency call uses
March – October 2024	Installations on State Parks and USFS Installations on remaining cooperating private land (if needed) Deliver updated maps and resources to public safety groups Continue communications and volunteer recruitment Monitor outcomes through surveys and emergency call uses
Nov – December 2024	Deliver final reports to funders

**c. Describe how this proposal directly responds to the negative impacts of the COVID-19 (described in 8.4(a) above) pandemic consistent with ARPA guidelines (include relevant citations from the Interim Final Rule and/or the FAQs as needed).**

This proposal to install mile markers and signage responds to the COVID-19-driven surge in outdoor recreation along the Yuba River and the subsequent call for improved amenities and infrastructure. Specifically, the project will help first-time visitors with situational and directional awareness and provide short-hand safety messaging. The project also will aid safety personnel, such as Search & Rescue, during the summer in locating emergencies.

Per the FAQs section 1.8, SYRCL, as a nonprofit organization, is eligible to receive ARPA funding from Nevada County, especially as this proposal is seeking assistance to improve parks and outdoor recreational spaces that have been impacted by the pandemic and improve visitor experience for the sake of health and safety (FAQ 2.18).

**8.7 TAB D: COMMUNITY BENEFIT (approximately 250-500 words):**

**a. Describe how this project/program will promote equitable access to recreation, enhance public health and safety, promote economic development, preserve environmental assets, and promote resilience with impactful, measurable outcomes.**

The primary outcome is a well-marked wild & scenic trail that allows visitors to explore the hiking system along the Yuba River safely. It will be a marketable eco-tourism benefit and help the community and land managers accommodate visitation growth, an economic and public safety benefit.

The pandemic has increased both the number and diversity of people who recreate outdoors. The need to address changing populations is evident in California's Environmental Equity and Outdoor Access Act which is targeting the need for local parks, playgrounds, trails, & green spaces to be more accessible to diverse populations. These issues are evident at the South Yuba. Like other organizations, we do not anticipate that the number of people recreating outdoors will decrease. Thus, delivering safety and river stewardship information to as many visitors as possible through mile markers and bilingual signage will promote equitable access to the Yuba's Wild & Scenic stretch and help reduce the negative impacts of recreation on sensitive and remote areas of the watershed.

The Mile Marker project will also promote community resilience. In one sense, safety officials and agency land managers will have a new tool for emergency response, which we hope will allow them to save resources and time. How often and effective the mile markers are used can be evaluated through surveys and data pulled from emergency calls. Second, we hope the mile markers will be seen as a community asset. By increasing the perception that there is more area for public recreation, they will allow people to explore lesser-known trails of the watershed, rather than "stay away" in the summer months because of crowds. We hope to see evidence of this in our annual visitor impact survey.

**8.8 TAB E: LEVERAGING PARTNERSHIPS AND RESOURCES (approximately 250-500 words):**

**a. Describe how your entity will leverage additional partnerships, funding and other resources as part of this proposal.**

The Mile Marker project will rely on the collaboration of the following:

- The South Yuba River Citizens League (SYRCL), project manager
- The Bureau of Land Management (BLM), agency land manager
- The US Forest Service (USFS), agency land manager
- California State Parks, (Parks), agency land manager
- Bear Yuba Land Trust (BYLT), NGO and private landowner coordinator

BLM will contribute staff time for obtaining a categorical exemption for the National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) for the mile markers installed on its land. It will also contribute staff time to working with volunteers and installing mile markers. Similarly, USFS will contribute staff time in seeking NEPA approval and working with volunteers in installing signage. Both have committed to taking on maintenance after project completion.

State Parks will contribute staff time to working with volunteers in installing signage once the appropriate approvals are in place. During the first year of the project, some project funds are requested to assist State Parks staff in obtaining California Environmental Quality Act permits, so that no money is diverted from existing maintenance needs.

SYRCL has donated staff time to developing the project concept and conducting pre-project research and planning with partners through the Yuba River Safety Cohort, including creating detailed project maps. BYLT also assisted with project concept development. Both NGOs' volunteer corps will contribute in-kind labor to the installation of the mile markers.

**8.9 TAB F: MANAGEMENT CAPACITY AND MEASURABLE OUTCOMES (approximately 250-500 words):**

**a. Describe how your entity will manage, implement, measure and report as part of this proposal.**

SYRCL will serve as the lead entity for this project, which will include managing the overall contract, paying vendors, procuring mile markers and related supplies, recruiting volunteers, hiring temporary staff, and coordinating partners. Partner coordination will involve tracking agencies' approval processes and BYLT's work with private landowners along the Wild & Scenic stretch – all critical planning work before the actual mile marker and sign installation.

Installation will occur in phases and be dependent on the status of permit approvals. SYRCL will adaptively manage this timeline so that volunteers and or temporary staff may be deployed to effectively work with on-site agency personnel. Volunteer recruitment will be conducted collaboratively between SYRCL and BYLT.

Further SYRCL will handle communications and social media to build awareness and public support for this project. It will also handle the outreach to public safety groups, such as the Sheriff's office, Search & Rescue, and NSJ Fire. These emergency response groups will need informational resources, maps, and project updates on the signage installation should emergency calls start using them. SYRCL will create these resources and ensure they are available online.

The primary outcome is a well-marked Wild & Scenic trail that allows visitors to explore the hiking system along the Yuba River safely. It will be a marketable eco-tourism benefit and help the community and land managers accommodate visitation growth, an economic & public safety benefit. A secondary outcome is the production of an emergency location system comprised of physical markers and corresponding maps and resources available to emergency personnel.

We will measure the Mile Marker project's impact through our annual visitor impact survey, feedback from the Yuba River Public Safety Cohort members and emergency response groups and, if possible, by monitoring the frequency trail markers are referenced in emergency calls.

We will report on the progress and benefits of this project through SYRCL's annual impact report, our visitor impact survey report, and website pages, and social media. Of course, we will comply with all grant reporting requirements outlined in the final grant contract.



**8.10 TAB G: BUDGET AND FINANCIALS (approximately 500 words for items “a” and “b” below; items “c” and “d” below are separate attachments):**

**a. What is your total funding request for this grant? (Maximum grant request capped at \$200,000. Applicants should request a grant amount that reflects what is necessary to accomplish project goals. The County reserves the right to recommend an amount more or less than the total requested.)**

Our request is \$75,000.

**b. Provide a brief budget narrative to accompany “Attachment B: Line-Item Budget,” summarizing major expenses and other sources of revenue including matching funds. Be sure to list sources and amounts of matching funds in your budget. (Note: Matching funds are not required but are strongly encouraged, and demonstration of leveraged resources and matching funds will affect score.)**

<b>\$26,500.00</b>	<b>Signage supplies and tools</b> Estimate for 60-66” carsonite posts, decals, anchor kits, tools, trail signs, etc.
<b>\$48,500.00</b>	<b>Staff and contractor time for planning and implementation</b> Project management, planning, permitting, procurement, design, volunteer management, communications, and installation. Some money will go to State Parks to assist with CEQA; Also includes BYLT time for private landowner engagement, design consultation, and volunteer recruitment.
<b>\$75,000.00</b>	<b>Total request to be used between July 2022 – December 2024</b>

In addition to this request, we estimate approximately 600 hours of volunteer labor may be needed, which will be a **\$17,970 in-kind contribution**.

SYRCL will cover \$940 of additional staff time not included above and \$14,428 of indirect costs related to administering the grant, which equals to a **\$15,369 matching contribution**. Please see budget attachment.

As mentioned above, SYRCL already has contributed staff time over the last year to project development, pre-planning, and mapping; BYLT also has contributed staff time to pre-planning.

BLM, USFS and State Parks will contribute staff time during the installation – amount to be determined.

BLM and USFS will contribute staff time to securing NEPA permitting – amount to be determined.

**c. Complete Attachment B: Line-Item Budget Provide an itemized funding request.**

**d. Attach the following financial documents (be sure to label your information as “Confidential” to allow redaction):**

- i. For Nonprofits: Audited Financial Statement and 990 (most recent year)**
- ii. For Businesses: State and Federal Tax Returns (most recent year) and Annual Financial Reports, including income statement and balance sheet (most recent year)**
- iii. For Special Purpose Districts and State or Federal agencies: Audited Financial Reports (most recent year)**