



Turn your ideas  
into solutions.



# Student Guide to a Successful Proposal

Thank you for being a part of the Caring for our Watersheds contest! The first step in entering to win up to \$1,000 is to write a 1,000 word proposal answering the question: **What can you do to improve your watershed?**

**Students will compete for \$6,000 in awards**

**Grades 9-12 Category**

1 <sup>st</sup> Place	2 <sup>nd</sup> Place	3 <sup>rd</sup> Place	4 <sup>th</sup> Place	5 <sup>th</sup> Place
\$1,000	\$900	\$800	\$700	\$600

6 <sup>th</sup> Place	7 <sup>th</sup> Place	8 <sup>th</sup> Place	9 <sup>th</sup> Place	10 <sup>th</sup> Place
\$500	\$450	\$400	\$350	\$300

Participating schools will also be eligible for over **\$11,000 in rewards**.  
**Students who implement their ideas are eligible for \$10,000 in funding.**

## The Proposal

1. Introduction (1 paragraph)
2. Define your watershed (1 paragraph)
3. Identify your concern (1 paragraph)
4. Explain your solution (3-4 paragraphs)
5. Explain the scope of your project (3-7 paragraphs)
6. How will this benefit the environment? (2 paragraphs)
7. Explain the resources needed (2 paragraphs)
8. Conclusion (1 paragraph)
9. Include visuals
10. Cite references

## SMART Proposal Writing

**When you are writing your proposal, ask yourself “is it S.M.A.R.T?”**

- |                       |  |
|-----------------------|--|
| <b>S – Specific</b>   | Is your plan detailed? Try to keep it from being too broad or general. Talk about what ONE SOLUTION and the actions you are going to take to make it happen.                           |
| <b>M – Measurable</b> | Set clear goals for yourself. What do you want your project to do? Make your goals specific so you can evaluate whether you are successful.  |
| <b>A – Achievable</b> | Make your project achievable. If you need help making your idea happen, make sure you identify who needs to be involved (government, industry organizations, conservation groups etc). |
| <b>R – Realistic</b>  | Is it possible to complete this project? This project could really happen and the more reasonable it is, the more likely it is to succeed.   |
| <b>T – Timely</b>     | How long would it take? When would you complete your project by?   |

Over for more information



Entries are judged on innovation, environmental impact, comprehensive scope, communication, budget, realistic solution and visuals.

Review the Judges Scoring Guide online

## More Help

Check out these useful websites which can provide you with more information.

Center for Land-Based Learning  
[www.landbasedlearning.org](http://www.landbasedlearning.org)

Sacramento River Watershed Program  
[www.sacriver.org](http://www.sacriver.org)

This program is brought to you by:

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Below is a more detailed overview of the Proposal Guidelines. Remember to include diagrams, graphics, visuals, or video to support your proposal. Include any references from your research (in citations).

## The Proposal- A Detailed Overview

- 1. Introduction:** This is your chance to catch our attention and tell us what you are going to talk about in your proposal. Give us a brief summary of your watershed, what is affecting it, and what your idea is. Make us care about your project by thinking about why it is important to you. Remember, this is YOUR water and YOUR watershed.
- 2. Define your watershed:** Tell us what watershed you live in. What is happening in your watershed? What could be impacting your watershed? Keep this section brief. Remember this is not an essay on the state of your watershed but a proposed SOLUTION to a concern in the watershed.
- 3. Identify the issue or concern you want to look at:** Pick one specific impact that you see in your watershed. Then, tell us about that impact: what is causing it, what impact do you see in the watershed (for example: is water quality decreasing), and why you think this issue is important to do something about it.
- 4. Explain your solution:** What can you do to improve your watershed? Within your school, your home, or your community, what is something you can do to help your watershed? You could educate people, monitor water quality, or create a piece of art; anything that you think could have a positive impact on your watershed. Be specific about what you will do, how it will work, and what it will take to make it happen. Be realistic!
- 5. Explain the scope of your project:** The scope means: how big of a project this is and how far the effects will go. Is this a local project that will affect your home, your school, your county, or even your province? Is this project something that you can do alone, or will you need help? How many people will be affected by this? Think about scope in terms of the amount of work you need to put in, the number of people it affects, and the amount of area it will cover.
- 6. How will this benefit the environment?** Explain to us how your idea is going to make positive changes to the environment. Maybe you plan to educate people so they change how they do things. Maybe you'll bring awareness to an issue that people know nothing about. Maybe you will make people see your watershed in a whole new way. Tell us why this is going to work! Remember, you are "selling" this idea to us.
- 7. Describe the resources needed to make this idea happen:** You should be able to implement this project, so what will you need to make it happen. What will it cost and where will you get the funding to pay for it? Tell us where and how you will make this project happen. Think about materials needed, the costs involved, as well as the time required to make this project happen.
- 8. Conclusion:** Sum up your idea and why it will help your watershed. Remember, don't introduce anything new about your idea, just go over what you've told us to remind us how great your idea is.
- 9. Include visuals:** Show us what your idea would look like in a model, drawing, cartoon, video or graph – whatever creative way you want to express your solution. For example, if you want to make a watershed awareness brochure – write and illustrate a brochure! If you want to plant a native garden – draw us a picture or make a magazine collage of the plants you would include, the size it would be, where it would be located etc.
- 10. Cite References:** Community judges will be reading your proposal and they are often conservation experts so it is important that you cite your references. Who knows ...you might be citing some of their research!