Figure 1
The Question 1 Project Application
Ranking Evaluation and Prioritization Process

START

1 Project Ranking by Jurisdiction

(Optional Process)

2 Project Self-Ranking by Applicant

3 Technical Advisory Group
Review and Recommendation to the State Lands Administrator

4 Preliminary Project List,
Public Review and Comment

5 Response to Comments and State Lands Administrator
Final List of Projects to be Funded

6 Grant Funding Awarded

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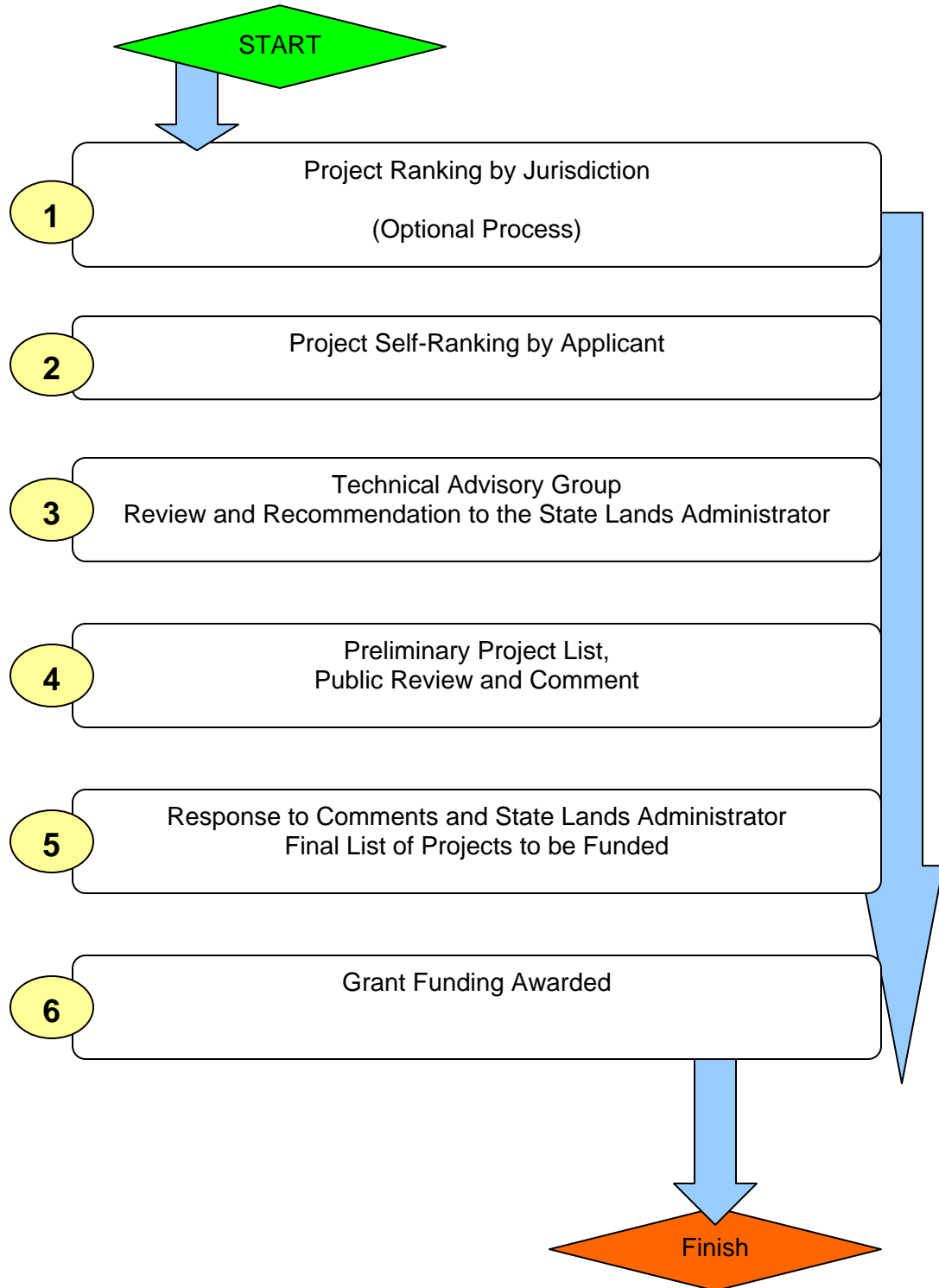
THE QUESTION 1 PROJECT APPLICATION
RANKING EVALUATION AND PRIORITIZATION PROCESS

This narrative and Figure 1above explain Question 1 ranking evaluation and prioritization process used by Question 1 staff and the State Lands Administrator.   This process results in a list of priority projects to be awarded grant funding during a given grant round. All complete applications received are reviewed for eligibility and ranking by Question 1 staff. A Notice of Ranking and Determination of Eligibility is provided to the applicant. Typically, funding requests far exceed the amount available. Projects are ranked to fund the highest quality proposals given that there is high competition for a limited amount of funding.

1 Project Ranking by Jurisdiction: In some cases, a county, municipality, or other entity may have several projects planned that may be eligible to be funded by a Question 1 grant. If two projects rank nearly equally by Question 1 staff, but a county or other entity has expressed more support for one of the two projects, then the project with greater county support may receive a higher ranking. It is highly recommended that project applicants coordinate with their respective county to determine how the project fits within the county's goals.

2 Project Self-Ranking: To assist the Administrator, applicants are asked to self-rank their project against the six criteria or topics described below.   Applicant's scores are used in part to preliminary rank projects. Final rankings are determined by the Administrator utilizing a similar point system, input from a Technical Advisory Group, and other staff input.   Each topic is self-scored 0 through 10, a zero (0) score indicating the lesser extent of significance relative to the criteria, 10 (ten) indicating the greatest amount of significance. Scores indicated for Environmental Significance and Public Benefit are weighted by a factor of 3 (three). Total possible score is 100 points. Points are allocated to each of the topics described below. Since the intent of the program is to protect, preserve and obtain the benefits of property and natural resources of the State of Nevada, "environmental significance" and "public benefit" receive higher point scores than the other ranking criteria.

*The Administrative Guidelines are under construction at this time.

Ranking Criteria: The criteria below are stated in the Question 1 Administrative Regulations.

1.   Environmental Significance:

The extent of environmental significance and degree of conservation and natural resource protection including, but not limited to, the preservation of a natural, scientific, cultural, archaeological, agricultural, paleontological or historical site, or a wetland or riparian resource.

2.   Public Benefit

The extent of the public benefit including, but not limited to, an overall advancement in the conservation and protection of the natural resources of the state, an enhancement to recreational opportunities, increased public access to lands and waters and the achievement of goals identified in adopted open space plans.

3.   Proposal Objectives/Ability to Implement:

The objectives of the proposal are clearly stated and the applicant has the ability to carry out the objectives of the proposal.
The project is detailed, the design is adequate and there is a detailed management plan included that specifies how the project will be maintained and be consistent with the intent of the Program.

4.   Proposal Costs/Matches:

The projected budget and associated costs of the proposal are reasonable and detailed, the amount and sources of matching funds contributed by the applicant are listed and the proposal meets its objectives in a cost effective manner.

5.   Cooperative Efforts/Outreach:

The proposal is a cooperative effort with other agencies, organizations or individuals. The extent of support from counties, municipalities and other public entities.

6.   Other Considerations:

- There is urgency for the action.
- The applicant utilizes matching contributions that exceed the program requirements.
- The application for acquisition of land includes water rights or other interests that will remain with the land in perpetuity.
- There is a local need for the proposal that warrants special consideration due to a lack of similar opportunities in the area.
- If considering an alternative to an acquisition of fee simple title, the applicant proposes an easement or remainders after life estate (conservation easement).

In addition to the above criteria, the Technical Advisory Groups suggested additional criteria be used to evaluate applications, including the incorporation of an environmental education component, and the relative fit of the project into other relative planning documents such as a regional trail or open space plan.

Staff Input: Question 1 staff reviews applications primarily to determine completeness and eligibility. In addition, projects are ranked by staff prior to being reviewed by a Technical Advisory Group (TAG). To assist the TAGs, scores that are more objective in nature may be determined by staff and provided to the TAG. This allows the TAG to concentrate their review time on the subjective application ranking criteria.

3 Technical Advisory Group (TAG) Review and Recommendation: All applicants are provided an opportunity to present their project to the TAG. Based on the presentation and staff's objective criteria scores in some cases, each member of the TAG reviews and ranks projects, and then the individual rankings are combined and averaged, resulting in a ranking by the full TAG. The project's merits are then discussed further, and in some cases, additional information is shared that may result in the TAG changing their original ranking. The TAG's final recommendation is then provided to Question 1 staff and the State Lands Administrator to consider. During Round 1, the majority of projects recommended to be awarded grant funding by a TAG were funded.

A list of projects that are proposed to be awarded grant funding is made public. Staff retains the ranking information in the event a higher ranked project drops out, in which case the next highest ranked project may become eligible to receive funding.

4 Administrator's Preliminary Project List; Public Review and Comment: The Administrator considers the TAG's recommendation and may revise the project list based on non-technical factors that may not have been considered by the TAG. The Administrator's Preliminary Recommended Project Funding List is then posted on the Division of State Lands website for public review and comment. The Administrator has the discretion to revise this list based on comments received.

5 Administrator's Final List of Projects to be Funded: Upon completion of the public review period, staff and the Administrator respond to comments received, and the Administrator may issue a press release describing the projects to be awarded grant funding. The final project list is published to the program's website, and each applicant receives a Grant Award letter. Applicants awarded grants work with staff to draft and execute a Funding

6 Agreement which allows for the disbursement of funding for a specific project.