

Open Project Selection Process

Background:

The Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) is a Federal assistance program of the National Park Service administered in Louisiana by the Office of State Parks Division of Outdoor Recreation. The LWCF provides matching fund assistance through reimbursement to approved projects for the acquisition of and/or development of outdoor recreation. State agencies and political subdivisions are eligible to apply. The LWCF is not available to non-profits or individuals. Applications are due April 1st annually. Applications are available on the Louisiana Office of State Parks website (www.crt.state.la.us/louisiana-state-parks/grant-opportunities-for-outdoor-recreation/index).

Additional information about the LWCF is also available through the National Park Service website (www.nps.gov/lwcf/index.htm) with detailed information available in the LWCF Manual (www.nps.gov/ncrc/programs/lwcf/manual/lwcf.pdf).

The Open Project Selection Process (OPSP) provides objective criteria and standards for grant selection that are explicitly based on each State's priority needs for the acquisition and development of outdoor recreation resources as identified in the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP). The OPSP is the connection between the SCORP and the use of LWCF grants to assist state efforts in meeting high priority outdoor recreation resource needs. Planning grants and technical assistance are available through the LWCF program to help the States develop and update their SCORP planning process.

Louisiana's OPSP is developed in partnership with development of the SCORP. This objective grading criterion applied to all applications seeking assistance ensures projects funded strive to address priorities identified in the SCORP toward meeting the recreational needs of Louisiana's citizens.

Initial Eligibility Review:

Criteria in this section must be addressed satisfactorily. Any component of this section that is not fully met by the project application must be set aside and cannot be considered for funding:

- Project sponsor in good standing (no unresolved compliance or administrative issues).
- Project sponsor will have full control over the entire site within the project boundary and can ensure compliance in perpetuity.
- Project sponsor has no current active grants.
- The application submitted is complete with all required documentation and was received within the application deadline.

Planning: (15 points maximum)

Quality planning for development of appropriate outdoor recreation is essential. The pending application should specifically include documentation pertaining to recreational planning for the entire area served by the proposed sponsor as well as the entire area of the intended project.

Scoring in this section is cumulative, which means that points are awarded for each component met by the application:

Planning - Continued

- Project sponsor has provided a master plan for the entire region that is under the control of the sponsor. (5 points)
- The application contains a master plan for the entire area within the provided boundary map for this specific project. (5 points)
- A development plan for the specific area identified in this project application is included. (5 points)
- No master plan or development plan is provided. (0 points)

Stewardship: (20 points maximum)

Project sponsors who have previously received assistance through the LWCF must demonstrate responsible stewardship of existing sites. Good stewardship includes maintenance of the existing facilities, fulfilling compliance standards, maintaining administrative relationships in good standing with state offices and positive promotion of the LWCF program.

Scoring in this section is cumulative, which means that points are awarded for each component met by the project sponsor:

- All sites under sponsorship of the applicant that have previously received LWCF assistance are in full compliance of LWCF requirements. (5 points)
- The site identified in this application has previously received LWCF assistance and is in full compliance of LWCF requirements. (5 points)
- The project sponsor has no prior history of LWCF compliance problems. (5 points)
- The project sponsor has previously received LWCF assistance and has adequately provided administrative documents without issues. (5 points)
- The sponsor has a history of LWCF compliance problems or administrative problems. (0 points)

Public Involvement: (15 points maximum)

Quality LWCF applications reflect the involvement of the general public rather than just individual views. To ensure this, points are awarded to applications that provide full documentation of public engagement in the development of the recreation plans reflected in the application.

Scoring in this section is cumulative, which means that points are awarded for each component met by the project application:

- The application includes documentation of public meetings, forums and/or surveys reflecting widespread input and support for the proposed project. (5 points)
- The application includes documentation of residents living within one-mile of the proposed site offering support for the proposed project. (5 points)
- The application identifies public fundraising efforts to provide financial input toward realization of the proposed project. (5 points)
- The application provides no identification of public involvement in the development of the project. (0 points)

Funding Mix: (15 points maximum)

Full identification of the financial resources needed to fully meet the goals identified in the application is essential. Project sponsors must be prepared to meet their share of the matching funds necessary to achieve the goals identified in the application. If a combination of funding sources is used, only the highest scoring funding source is counted, but that funding source must provide at least 50% of the sponsor's investment in the project.

Scoring in this section is for the highest level achieved and each application can only receive points from one of the following criteria categories:

- Matching funds for this sponsor are from monies collected through a public fund drive. (15 points)
- Matching funds for this sponsor are from the value of donated property. (10 points)
- Matching funds for this sponsor are from monies received through a private grant. (9 points)
- Matching funds for this sponsor are achieved through in kind services. (8 points)
- Matching funds for this sponsor are from monies received through a tax millage. (7 points)
- Matching funds for this sponsor are from monies received through a state capital outlay. (6 points)
- Matching funds for this sponsor are from monies received through a Federal grant that can be used to match LWCF funds. (5 points)
- Matching funds for this sponsor are from monies identified in the sponsor's general fund budget. (4 points)
- No matching fund source is identified. (0 points)

Maintenance Capacity: (5 points maximum)

Project sponsors must fully identify the means by which they have the capacity to provide ongoing maintenance of the project site. The sponsor must also identify the capacity and willingness to ensure the project site will remain an outdoor recreation asset to the public in perpetuity.

Scoring in this section is cumulative, which means that points are awarded for each component met by the project application:

- The sponsor has a dedicated recreation maintenance department, which has been fully identified in the application. (2 points)
- The sponsor has a public works department which has been identified in the application as responsible for ongoing site maintenance. (2 points)
- The sponsor has identified another resource with responsibility for ongoing maintenance of the site. (1 point)

Fairness: (10 points maximum)

LWCF assistance is limited and subject to the Federal budget cycle and apportionment to the State. All efforts must be made to fairly distribute assistance to provide quality outdoor recreation to all citizens of the State. Per capita funding levels are determined by dividing the amount of funding provided to locally sponsored projects in a given parish by the parish population based on the latest available census figures. (Ex: East Baton Rouge has received \$3,729,989.60 in LWCF assistance divided by the 2013 census of 445,227 equals \$8.38 in LWCF assistance per capita). The Louisiana average is \$15.69 per capita.

Fairness - Continued

Scoring in this section is for the highest level achieved and each application can only receive points from one of the following criteria categories:

- The Parish in which the project is proposed has received less than \$5 per capita in LWCF assistance through the history of the program through locally sponsored projects. (10 points)
- The Parish in which the project is proposed has received less \$5 - \$10 per capita in LWCF assistance through the history of the program through locally sponsored projects. (5 points)
- The Parish in which the project is proposed has received \$10 - \$15 per capita in LWCF assistance through the history of the program through locally sponsored projects. (3 points)
- The Parish in which the project is proposed has received \$15 - \$20 per capita in LWCF assistance through the history of the program through locally sponsored projects. (1 point)
- The Parish in which the project is proposed has received \$20 or more per capita in LWCF assistance through the history of the program through locally sponsored projects. (minus 5 points)

Low Income Areas: (5 points maximum)

Special emphasis is placed on providing facilities to areas that support recreation for low income groups.

- The application specifically identifies how the project will provide recreation for low income groups. (5 points)

Special Needs: (10 points maximum)

Recreational infrastructure developed to provide facilities to support individuals with special needs and facilities to support disabilities are greatly needed beyond required meeting of standards identified through the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Scoring in this section is for the highest level achieved and each application can only receive points from one of the following criteria categories:

- Recreation identified in this application is specifically designed to provide for individuals with special needs and/or disabilities. (10 points)
- Recreation identified in this application specifically identifies some facilities that are for individuals with special needs and/or disabilities. (5 points)
- The project does not specifically identify facilities that are designed for individuals with special needs and/or disabilities. (0 points)

Natural Disasters: (5 points)

Recovery of recreational facilities and/or development of new recreational facilities in the aftermath of a natural disaster are essential in overcoming the impact of such a catastrophe.

- The application is for a project in a Parish that has been declared a Federal natural disaster area within the last five years. (5 points)

Addressing SCORP Priorities: (20 points maximum)

Projects receiving LWCF assistance must strive to meet priorities identified in the latest SCORP. These priorities were identified through significant research and reflect the most important outdoor recreation development needed to meet the needs of the citizens of our state. These priorities are included on page 96 of the current SCORP.

Scoring in this section is for the highest level achieved and each application can only receive points from one of the following criteria categories:

- Project addresses the highest SCORP priority - trails. (20 points)
- Project addresses the 2nd ranked SCORP priority – public water access. (18 points)
- Project addresses the 3rd ranked SCORP priority – land acquisition. (16 points)
- Project addresses the 4th ranked SCORP priority – camping. (14 points)
- Project addresses the 5th ranked SCORP priority – playgrounds and picnic areas. (12 points)
- Project addresses the SCORP identified priority not among the top 5, but identified as a recreational need within the SCORP. (10 points)
- The project does not address one of the top 10 SCORP priorities. (0 points)

Land Acquisition: (5 points)

A high priority for the LWCF is the acquisition of land and dedication of that land to outdoor recreation in perpetuity.

- The project acquires land that has not previously been dedicated or operated for outdoor recreation purposes through purchase or an act of donation. (5 points)

Innovation: (5 points)

Breaking new ground in recreational development is important for the future of the LWCF.

- The project proposal is innovative in design and development potential. (5 points)

Bonus: (5 points)

Each funding cycle includes projects that offer great recreational quality for the LWCF, but are not funded solely due to the lack of available monies through the budget cycle.

- The project was submitted in the preceding funding year, but was not approved only due to the lack of available LWCF monies. (5 points)