

# Land & Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) Frequently Asked Questions



## **How was the LWCF Program created?**

The LWCF Act was signed into law in September 1964 by President Lyndon B. Johnson. The legislation initially utilized monies generated through off shore oil exploration as a reinvestment into the national recreation infrastructure. Monies from off shore oil exploration continue to make up a percentage of the Federal funds used for the program along with monies allocated in the Federal budget. The program is administered at the National level by the US Department of Interior, in consultation with the National Park Service, regional administration located in Atlanta. The Louisiana Office of State Parks, Division of Outdoor Recreation, is tasked with administration of the program for the state of Louisiana.

## **How has Louisiana benefitted from the LWCF program? [LWCF State Grants program](#)**


The State side of the LWCF provides matching grants to States and local governments for the acquisition and development of public outdoor recreation areas and facilities. Over its first 49 years (1965 - 2014), LWCF has provided more than \$16.7 billion to acquire new Federal recreation lands as grants to State and local governments. Since program inception (1965-2022), Louisiana has received over \$86.8 million in Federal funds through NPS providing matching funds for 664 outdoor recreation development projects, 119 were land acquisitions projects adding over 75 thousand acres of protected lands for public outdoor recreation.

## **What is the available funding?**

Monies for the LWCF are allocated through the Federal budget and then apportioned to individual states and U.S. territories through the National Park Service (NPS). LWCF is a matching fund reimbursement program. Accordingly, grant recipients must pay 100% of the cost of an item before submitting requests for reimbursement. LWCF provides for a 50/50 match.

These programs encourage donation of private funds, materials, right-of-way, and services at fair market value to be counted toward the match. However, donations of existing State or local government right-of-way cannot be credited toward the local match.

## **What is the timeline for the application process?**

The application deadline is April 1. Applications are reviewed at the state level, vetted, scored and ranked according to Louisiana's SCORP 2020 Top 10 Priorities (see OPSP) prior to the state's submittal to NPS for federal pre-review. Grants are typically awarded in September for a 3 year Performance Period. For a more detailed explanation of the process, click [HERE](#) . (link to updated doc)

### **What documentation is needed for the application?**

Click [HERE](#) for a complete list of documents, and examples. (see updated list)

### **If awarded how will I get the money?**

Reimbursements will be made only for those approved scope items that were included on the required application documents, approved and listed on the Project Agreement. Normally, requests for reimbursements are processed and funds dispersed. An explanation of what is required prior to billing can be found [here](#).

### **If awarded, is my project required to credit LWCF?**

Yes, projects funded by LWCF need to give credit to the LWCF Program. By promoting the program, we are informing the public about the source of the funding and bringing awareness to this federal program that requires *congressional approval*. Contact our office for guidance on signage and promotion language.

### **What are the requirements for planning?**

Good planning to determine the need and the approach to meet the need is essential for development of a quality recreational facility. LWCF applications are evaluated through the Open Project Selection Process (OPSP) with credit given to those applications indicating quality planning and public involvement in development of the master plan and project development plan. Projects should further a recreational goal identified by the most recent Louisiana Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) or in a local/regional comprehensive plan.

### **Who is not eligible to apply?**

Project sponsors with responsibility of a previously assisted LWCF site that has been found to have serious compliance issues with Federal regulations as detailed in Chapter 8 of [the LWCF Manual](#) are not eligible to apply for new assistance. Resolution of serious compliance issues must be addressed before additional assistance is made available.

Project sponsors with ~~currently~~ active LWCF grants within their jurisdiction are not eligible to apply. Projects under their sponsorship must have achieved completion of the scope of work as identified in the State Agreement and have submitted all closeout documentation no later than the preceding December 31st to allow the required 90-day period to achieve closeout through the National Park Service before the annual application deadline of April 1st. In other words, a sponsor with an active project must have completed all work and submitted closeout materials by December 31 in order to be eligible to apply by April 1 of the following year.

### **What type of projects are permitted in the LWCF?**

Grant recipients obtaining assistance through the LWCF may engage in projects such as:

- Acquisition of fee simple title to property from a willing seller, and or acquisition by Act of Donation;
- Construction of new outdoor recreation facilities, support elements and trails on Sponsor owned land (state, parish, or municipal lands), where a recreational need is shown;
- Renovation or reconstruction of existing outdoor recreation facilities;

- Structure design or engineering, site design or GPS mapping when included within professional design fees (not to exceed 10% of grant); There are costs such as site investigation, and application document preparation that may be eligible as pre-award expenses.
- Development and site work activities such as: subgrade preparation, base course, soil sterilization, earthwork, minor drainage or erosion control, re-vegetation, natural and hardened surfacing, culverts, low-water crossings, bank improvements, retaining walls, guard rails, and hand rails, pedestrian bridges, boardwalks;
- Providing or improving access and use of facilities by persons with disabilities.

### **What types of projects are not permitted for assistance through LWCF?**

A grant recipient may not use monies received under this Program for:

- Planning or environmental documentation.
- Condemnation of any kind of interest in property.
- Construction of indoor facilities other than those that qualify as support facilities
- Construction of facilities outside of existing or proposed LWCF 6(f) boundaries
- Storm water management or drainage and irrigation
- Mitigation Plans or mitigation credits

### **What are the recommended LWCF project guidelines?**

Projects selected for funding should:

- Further an outdoor recreation -related goal in the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) or (documented) sponsor's regional master plan;
- Include a commitment for maintenance and long-term public access;
- Be sponsored by a qualifying political subdivision or state agency who is also the land owner;
- Be in a political subdivision with good standing regarding maintenance and compliance issues of previously assisted LWCF sites
- Include a commitment to starting and completing the project quickly and efficiently;
- Plan to have all required permits in hand at time of application.
- Plan to submit construction plans and specifications prepared and certified by registered professionals: Engineer, Architect and/or Landscape Architect who insure that the plans and specifications meet all applicable federal, state and local codes, current engineering standards and meet or exceed all ADA standards; that health, safety, durability and economy received consideration consistent with the scope and objectives of the project.
- Be prepared to provide additional documentation as needed and requested by the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), Tribal Historic Preservation Office (THPO) and the National Park Service (NPS) per their review(s).

For more information about the Land and Water Conservation Fund Program, consult the [National Park Service website](#) and the [LWCF Manual](#).

For application development assistance contact:

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