# I. Program Description

The purpose of the Land and Water Conservation Fund’s (LWCF) Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership (ORLP) Program is to provide grants to acquire and/or develop public lands for outdoor recreation purposes consistent with the LWCF, but specifically targeting projects located within or serving jurisdictions delineated by the Census Bureau from the 2010 Census as urbanized areas, that is, areas with a population of 50,000 or more people and consisting of densely settled territory. Further, specifically targeting projects located in or directly accessible to neighborhoods or communities that are underserved in terms of parks and recreation resources and where there are significant populations of people who are economically disadvantaged, minority, and/or youth.

The LWCF State and Local Assistance program is operated by the National Park Service (NPS) in partnership with designated lead agencies in each of the 50 States as well as American Samoa, the District of Columbia, Guam, Northern Marianas Islands, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands. Each fiscal year Congress appropriates money from the LWCF for this program, which traditionally is in turn allocated to the States based on a legislative formula.

This competition round will target projects that will create or reinvigorate parks and other outdoor recreation spaces located in Census-delineated urbanized areas. Further, the NPS will prioritize the selection of projects that will: directly connect people to outdoor places, particularly in communities that are underserved\* in terms of parks and other outdoor recreation areas and have significant numbers of individuals who are economically disadvantaged; create short-term and/or permanent jobs and/or help stimulate economic development; create engage and empower members of the affected community in the development of the project; involve and expand public-private partnerships, particularly to provide for the leveraging of resources; and rely on a high degree of coordination among the public, multiple levels of government, and the private sector, to improve recreation opportunities for all. In addition to the competition objectives, selected projects must advance goals of or otherwise meet priority recreation needs identified in their State’s SCORP.

\* For the purposes of this competition, “underserved communities” should be considered as those with: (1) no existing parks; (2) some parks but not enough to support the size of the population or otherwise satisfy existing recreational demand; or (3) some existing parks (potentially even an adequate number of parks) that are so deteriorated/obsolete or underdeveloped that redevelopment or rehabilitation would significantly increase the number of people who could be served and/or significantly increase the types of recreational opportunities that would be provided (in a way that could be equated to the impact of a new park).

The LWCF Grant Assistance Manual, v. 69 (October 1, 2008) establishes the eligibility, procedural, and programmatic requirements for LWCF grants, including ORLP grants. The Manual can be found at https://www.nps.gov/subjects/lwcf/upload/lwcf\_manual.pdf. It outlines the criteria and process for eligible states and territories to develop a SCORP, nominate projects to the NPS, and implement grants for selected projects. ORLP projects must be implemented in accordance with the [Manual](https://www.nps.gov/subjects/lwcf/upload/lwcf_manual.pdf), as well as the NPS Grant Agreement terms and conditions, and OMB requirements at 2 CFR 200.

**Secretary of the Interior Priorities**

This program supports key initiatives of the Secretary of the Interior, principally “providing access to outdoor recreation opportunities.” This is the entire purpose of this program. The program also supports the “creating jobs in the American economy” initiative, and, although referring to state and locally-owned lands versus Federal, the Secretary's Top 10 priority, “Shift the balance towards providing greater public access to public lands over restrictions to access.”

# II. Funding Available

Approximately $13.3 million is available nationwide for competition in 2018. The maximum amount of competitive funds that may be requested per proposal is $750,000. There is also a minimum level of $250,000. Grants require a minimum of 1:1 match from non-federal sources.

# III. Eligibility Information

State agencies, political subdivisions such as cities, counties, and special purpose districts such as park districts; and federally-recognized Indian tribes that are organized to govern themselves and perform the functions of a general purpose unit of government are eligible to apply.  However, to be eligible for this competition the political subdivisions or tribes 1) **must represent a jurisdiction of at least 50,000 people AND** 2) either be named as one of the 497 urbanized areas delineated by the Census Bureau OR be a jurisdiction that lies geographically within one of the delineated urbanized areas. 3) If the project sponsor is a state agency or a county, the project must serve one or more of the urbanized area jurisdictions as described above.

In addition, the project itself should be physically located within one of the 497 urbanized areas. Projects that are not located within an urbanized area boundary are not necessarily ineligible, but may not compete well unless the sponsor can make a compelling case for how the project will serve the target populations, recognizing that access and proximity factor in the scoring criteria.

A list of these areas was published in the *Federal Register* on March 27, 2012 (77 Fed. Reg. 18652-18669). Individuals, nonprofit organizations, and private organizations are not eligible.

For Minnesota this includes:

* Minneapolis St. Paul Area: Includes areas in Anoka, Carver, Dakota, Hennepin Ramsey, Scott, Washington, Sherburne and Wright Counties.
* Rochester Area
* Duluth Area
* Mankato Area
* St. Cloud Area
* Moorhead Area

Maps of these areas are located on the program [National Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership Program](http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/grants/recreation/national_outdoor_rec.html).

Each State has a lead agency designated by the State’s Governor or by legislation for the purposes of implementing LWCF in that State. In Minnesota, the lead agency is the Department of Natural Resources (DNR). Only the DNR can be a primary applicant for an LWCF grant; the NPS cannot make grants to entities other than the state lead agency. Applications submitted directly to the NPS by entities other than the DNR will automatically be rejected. The DNR applies on behalf of itself or for other state agencies, political subdivisions, and Indian tribes.

The DNR will be responsible for: reviewing proposals for completeness and eligibility requirements; ensuring that proposals are consistent outdoor recreation priorities outlined in the State’s SCORP; and submitting up to three proposals for the national competition. If a proposal is selected for funding, the DNR will also be responsible for submitting the final application to the NPS. Grants will be awarded to the DNR, which will be responsible for ensuring that allocated funds are used for the purposes of and in a manner consistent with this program, including funds awarded to an eligible sub-applicant.

Cost Sharing

As required by the LWCF Act, LWCF ORLP grants must be matched at a minimum level ratio of 1:1 with non-Federal funds. Matching funds may be derived from state, local, non-governmental, or private sources in the form of cash or in-kind contributions. The competition will favor contributions of cash or land from non-public sources over other types and sources. Eligible costs, sources of match, and other cost-sharing requirements are detailed in Chapter 5 of the [LWCF Manual](http://www.nps.gov/ncrc/programs/lwcf/manual/lwcf.pdf). The competition will also favor projects that involve partnerships among the public, private, and non-profit sectors that result in the leveraging of resources (e.g., money, donations of land, supplies, services, etc.) and the extent of that leverage that allows the LWCF-eligible costs included in the project budget to exceed the 1:1 match required by the LWCF Act.

The following costs may not be counted toward the non-Federal matching share (not inclusive):

* Any project costs incurred before the grant start date, unless they are an eligible pre-award cost as defined in the LWCF Manual or unless the sponsor gets prior approval from the State lead agency and the NPS (i.e., waiver of retroactivity).
* Any funds or in-kind contributions such as land or services that have been used previously or will be used in the future to satisfy the matching requirements of another LWCF grant or other Federal grant.
* Any funds or in-kind contributions such as lands or services that were or will be acquired with other Federal funds, unless otherwise provided by Federal law.

In addition, projects assisted with LWCF funds may not include funds from other Federal sources, even if all programs’ match requirements are met.

Eligible Projects

LWCF grants may be used for the acquisition or development (or a combination) of lands and facilities that will provide outdoor recreation opportunities to the public. Development includes things like sport and other playing fields, parks and picnic areas, water-based recreation facilities such as pools and spray parks, trails, campgrounds, boating facilities, etc. Certain kinds of support facilities, such as restrooms, may also be eligible.

As a condition of the grant, the NPS requires that language be recorded against the deed of the assisted property advising that the property was acquired with or assisted by Federal funds from the LWCF and that the property must be preserved for outdoor recreation uses in perpetuity.

If a project is selected, the project cost estimate defines the maximum federal share that can be requested. This is intended to prevent changes in the scope of the project after selection that might alter the competitive nature of the project

# IV. Application and Submission Information

For the purposes of conducting the competition, the DNR and NPS will review and evaluate projects based on pre-applications. The pre-application must include all Required Elements, described below.

Projects will be scored and ranked in context based on an evaluation of how the project meets the review and selection criteria for the competition and the general requirements of the LWCF Act. Therefore it is critical that applicants follow the guidelines outlined below to be able to address each element as completely and accurately as possible. The requested elements are designed to solicit a minimum level of necessary information to facilitate evaluation and ranking of the proposed project.

Project sponsors are advised that the pre-application does not include important documentation needed to substantiate the project’s compliance with environmental and historic/cultural resources laws (i.e., NEPA, NHPA), and that such documentation will be required if their proposal is selected for funding by the National Park Service. Further, selection of the project could be revoked if development of these documents reveals a previously unknown issue that materially affects the project’s eligibility or feasibility of completion. If this occurs, the NPS will move to the next project on the ranked list.

## Required Elements

### **1) Project narrative (target length: 10 pages)**

The narrative provides the sponsor the opportunity to describe the purpose of their project and how it meets the objectives of the competition; intended outcomes of the project; and expected benefits (short and long term) and other impacts in terms of improving recreation opportunities that meet an identified recreational deficiency or need for a neighborhood or community. Project sponsors are encouraged to review the descriptions of the 9 (nine) evaluation criteria outlined in Section E to understand how projects will be evaluated and scored. We recommend that the narrative be generally outlined in the order of the criteria (headers are provided below) to ensure that the project (and budget) narratives directly address each criteria.

 *Project Overview*:

For acquisition projects: provide a street address sufficient to provide at least a general location for the property, a description of the property, and an explanation of the need for its acquisition. Explain whether the acquisition would create a new public park or recreation area or is to expand an existing site. Describe and quantify the types of resources and features on the property (e.g., 50 acres of forested area, 2,000 feet of waterfront, scenic views, unique or special features, recreation amenities, historic/cultural resources) as well as any constraints (e.g., existing development; hazardous materials/contamination history; and restrictions such as institutional controls, easements, rights-of-way, reversionary interests, above ground/underground utilities; etc.). Describe the plans for developing the property for recreation purposes after acquisition and the timeframe, including when the site is expected to be open and accessible for public use. Describe the current status of the acquisition, including negotiations with the landowner and development of due diligence materials such as title work and appraisal.

For development projects: provide a street address sufficient to provide at least a general location for the property, a description of the planned physical improvements and/or facilities, and the reason(s) such development is needed. Explain whether the work involves new development or rehabilitation or replacement of existing recreation facilities. Describe and quantify the types of resources and features available on the site as well as any constraints. Describe the current status of planning for the development and the timeframe for completing the project, including when the site will be open (or reopened) and accessible for public use.

For projects that will comprise acquisition and development (including projects where the land acquisition is being used as in-kind match) provide a narrative that combines the elements above.

*Improving physical and recreational access and addressing recreational deficiencies*:

Describe how the proposed project will create or significantly improve access to close-to-home park and recreation opportunities by expanding the quantity or quality of parks or other outdoor recreation areas. This can be through either: creating a new park/outdoor recreational area or significantly enhancing the quality of an existing park/outdoor recreation area by replacing or upgrading infrastructure to be able to provide high priority recreation services. Describe the new or expanded types of outdoor recreation opportunities and/or capacities that will be created as a result of the acquisition and/or development. Describe how the project meets an identified recreational need or deficiency.

*Improving recreation service and economic opportunity for the target population*:

Describe the activities and uses planned for the project site after acquisition and/or development.

Describe how the group targeted by this competition (low to moderate income individuals or families for whom serious recreation deficiencies exist), will benefit from this project. Sponsors are encouraged to include available data/statistics about the local population to be served by the park/recreation area.

Describe the anticipated economic benefits that will be produced by the project, such as short- and long-term employment opportunities, or how the new or revitalized park could stimulate other improvements in the target neighborhood. For example, development projects would be expected to support short-term construction jobs, as well as potentially permanent additional recreation-based jobs due to new or expanded programming that can be supported as a result of the project. Outside of the park, local businesses could benefit due to new or increased numbers of users.

 *Project Engagement and Participation*:

Describe the process that led to the development of this proposal. In particular, focus on efforts to engage the public, especially the local community that will be served by the park, and their participation in the project as well as that of other interested/affected entities. Describe any partnerships or other collaborative efforts, such as with neighborhood groups, community organizations, or private entities that have helped or will help facilitate the project. Also, describe or provide evidence of local support for the project, particularly from local residents.

Supporting details could include how the public was notified of and provided opportunity to be involved in planning for and development of the project; who has been involved (including local, state, and federal agency professionals; subject matter experts; and private organizations) and how were they able to help develop or review the proposal; and formal public participation processes such as meetings, hearings, and comment periods, including dates and length of time provided for the public to participate in the planning process and/or to provide comments.

*Innovation and Transformative Attributes*:

Describe the extent to which the project encompasses or exhibits innovation, especially in ways that can be transformative for the neighborhood(s) and community in terms of revitalization. These qualities could be related to aspects such as: redevelopment of a blighted or distressed properties; involvement of new or non-traditional partners; unusual features in the project design; employment of novel solutions to issues in/challenges to addressing the community’s recreation needs; the ability to affect or advance other complementary and intrinsic benefits beyond providing new or enhancing park or other outdoor recreation spaces; and other similar characteristics.

*Project’s Alignment with SCORP and other applicable plans*:

Describe how the project will advance, implement, or meet a priority recreation need and/or goal of the applicable state’s SCORP and if applicable, other relevant park and recreation planning documents. Projects can also receive credit for aligning with or advancing priorities of other comprehensive or master plans at the city, regional, and/or state level such as community revitalization plans, economic development plans, open space plans, etc.; and/or benefitting other initiatives and programs.

*Project Readiness*:

Describe the status of the planning for the grant project and its readiness to be implemented. Provide a narrative description of the timeline for the planned scope of work and a proposed period of performance, including providing dates for discrete benchmarks of significant work elements that will support the grant project’ implementation to completion. Describe the current use (if any) or disposition of the property targeted for the project if uses will need to be discontinued or the site rehabilitated. If there are any existing non-outdoor recreation or other non-public uses that are intended to continue on the property on an interim or permanent basis and/or proposed in the future, these should be explained.

*Applicant and Partner Capacity*:

Describe the project sponsor’s experience in completing other similar park and recreation projects. If partners are or will be involved in the grant project’s implementation, their role(s) should also be described. Describe who holds or will hold title to the property and how the park or recreation area will be managed and maintained to assure permanent use for public outdoor recreation. Describe the funding resources available to support the operation and maintenance. If partners will be involved with long-term management of the property, this should be described. If applicable, the project sponsor’s past experience with managing grant funds, particularly from the LWCF or other federal awards, should be characterized.

### **2) Budget Narrative (target length: 5 pages, including tables)**

*Viability and reasonableness of the project’s budget*:

This section should explain how the requested LWCF assistance will be used and how the match requirement will be met, including any costs proposed for overmatch. Break down, describe, and justify the proposed costs, which should clearly correspond to the details of the work activities outlined in the project narrative. Project sponsors are encouraged to provide budget information in both narrative and tabular forms to ensure sufficient detail so the budget can be clearly understood, particularly in terms of what costs are proposed for reimbursement by the LWCF ORLP grant and what costs will be used to satisfy the 1:1 match.

Project sponsors are encouraged to review Chapters 3 and 5 of the [LWCF Manual](https://www.nps.gov/subjects/lwcf/upload/lwcf_manual.pdf) to ensure understanding about eligible costs. Of note: Land acquisition costs should be based on appraised value or other estimate of fair market value. Be sure to explain the basis for the value estimate. Acquisition-related support costs (e.g., appraisals) are not eligible LWCF expenses or as match. On the development side, for this competition, project management/administration expenses, design/engineering fees, and contingencies may be included in the budget, but they are capped at 5% (administration) and 10% (each, design/engineering and contingencies) of the total budget, respectively. If indirect costs are planned (by the State lead agency) this should be reflected in the budget.

Match contributions can consist of cash, land donation, and in-kind contributions of supplies or services needed to implement the project. Describe the availability or firmness of commitments for funds to meet the 1:1 match and for the full amount of funds needed to complete the project, including any match commitment(s) that exceed the 1:1 requirement. Note that, at a minimum, sufficient funding to meet the 1:1 match requirement must be in hand or firmly committed at the time of application. If the project match exceeds the 1:1 requirement, indicate how the additional funds/in-kind contributions will be used. Overmatch costs needn’t necessarily be eligible for LWCF but more weight will be given for leveraging if they are. Project sponsors should also ensure costs are reasonable and that it’s clear why they are being included in the project budget.

As noted in Section C.2, other federal resources may not be used as a match for the LWCF grant unless such treatment is specifically authorized the source’s enabling legislation. Project sponsors should be prepared to show supporting documentation if requested. Project sponsors are not permitted to also seek LWCF formula funding to support the project.

If the LWCF ORLP grant-funded project is part of a larger project, please be sure the LWCF-related components of the budget can be clearly discerned. It can be difficult for reviewers to evaluate and score a budget when it’s not clear how the grant funds will be used or what specific costs are being provided as match, and project sponsors risk having the requested federal share reduced if it appears ineligible costs are proposed to be charged to the grant or used as part of the 1:1 match share. Note that the LWCF ORLP and match funded element(s) of the project must still result in a viable recreation opportunity that is not reliant on other funding even in the context of a larger planned project.

***Partner Support and Leveraging*:**

Describe the how project is or will be supported by partnerships with the public, private, and/or non-profit sectors specifically through contributions of money, land, supplies, services, etc.

In addition to the types of contributions and amounts, be sure to describe the source(s) of the contributions proposed for the match, particularly if they are from non-public partners in the project, and whether they are already available or still being secured.

If applicable, describe how and to what extent the LWCF ORLP grant will play a role in leveraging funding for the project from non-federal public, private, and/or non-profit resources, and if they allow the project budget to exceed the 1:1 match requirement. Projects that leverage the LWCF ORLP grant funds beyond the 1:1 match will be favored, but more points will be awarded when the leverage is comprised of LWCF-eligible costs directly related to the acquisition or construction work versus other kinds of costs that support the project in a larger sense but aren’t necessarily needed to support the acquisition or development.

### **3) Project Location and Site Maps/Plans**

The pre-application should include:

1) A neighborhood/community map showing the location of the project and any other existing recreation resources in the vicinity of the project site;

2) A map or aerial photo delineating the project area to be acquired and/or developed, as well as the proposed boundary of the larger park/recreation area that would be subject to the protection provisions of 54 USC 200305(f)(3), and

3) A plan or sketch of the site that depicts the likely location of planned recreational improvements and other features such as where the public will access the site, parking, etc.

### **4) Letters of support/Photos:**

Letters of support: These are not required but may be helpful in terms of substantiating public support for the project, evidence of partnerships, etc. To ensure such letters are considered by the merit panel, *submit them with the application*. Letters sent separately to the NPS are discouraged because they are unlikely to be received in time. Letters arriving after the pre-application deadline will not be provided to the panel.

Photos: These are not required but may be helpful to provide context such as current site conditions, the surrounding environment, etc.

## Supplemental Elements:

The following Supplemental Element is not required with the pre-application, but if the proposal is selected for funding, they will be required for review with the final application before grant funds could be awarded. The noted form is available on the LWCF program [website](https://www.nps.gov/subjects/lwcf/lwcf-forms.htm).

• Proposal Description and Environmental Screening Form (PD/ESF)

## Submission Dates

**Applications are due to the DNR, Division of Parks and Trails by Wednesday, August 8, 2018.** Applications are to be submitted electronically in a “.pdf” format. Paper submission of applications will no longer be accepted unless arranged in advance of the due date with program staff. To submit the application, email a pdf version of the application and attachments to Parkgrants.DNR@state.mn.us.

***Funding Restrictions***

Certain expenses are ineligible for LWCF funding, including:

• Grant administrative expenses,

• Incidental costs related to land acquisition such as appraisals or title work,

• Operation and maintenance activities,

• Facilities that support semi-professional or professional athletics such as baseball stadiums or soccer arenas,

• Indoor facilities such as recreation centers or facilities that support primarily non-outdoor purposes like dining facilities or certain overnight accommodation (such as a lodge or hotel), or

• Acquisition of lands, or interests in lands, that completely restrict access to specific persons (e.g., non-residents of a community).

Awards will contain conditions (outlined in the LWCF Manual and the General Provisions) that recipients must meet as a term of accepting the grant, such as the requirement to record a covenant or other restriction against the deed for the property acknowledging the LWCF funding and the restrictions on converting the property to non-outdoor recreation uses, or installing a permanent sign at the site acknowledging the LWCF funding.

# V. Application Review Information

# 1. Evaluation Criteria

Part I – Relevance of Proposed Project to Core Program Goals (Merit panel; 60 points total)

1. Improves physical and recreational access and addresses recreational deficiencies - 20 points:

This criterion will assess the degree to which the proposed project will create or significantly enhance access to close to home park and recreation opportunities by expanding the quantity or quality of parks or other outdoor recreation areas by either: creating a new park/outdoor recreational area or significantly enhancing the quality of an existing park/outdoor recreation area by upgrading the infrastructure to be able to provide high priority recreation services.

Priority will be given to projects located in 1) densely settled neighborhoods or communities that lack any other or adequate parks/outdoor recreation areas within a reasonable service area (i.e. within .5 miles or a 10-minute walk for a neighborhood park, or within 1 mile for a park serving multiple neighborhoods or a community); or 2) whose existing park/outdoor recreation areas are not of a comparable caliber to park/recreation areas elsewhere in the jurisdiction; or 3) whose park/recreation areas are otherwise inadequate to serve community needs.

1. Improving recreation service to economically-disadvantaged neighborhoods/communities while also creating jobs and/or spurring economic development - 15 points:

This criterion will assess the degree to which the project will (a) improve outdoor recreational opportunities for low to moderate income individuals or families for whom serious recreation deficiencies exist, (b) provide short-term and/or permanent employment opportunities, particularly within the same target community, and/or (c) help generate economic benefits for the community outside of the park.

Priority will be given to projects located where they will serve neighborhoods with significant populations of the target group that are lacking in recreation opportunities along with providing employment and economic benefits. Applicant responses are encouraged to include available data/statistics about the local populations to be served by the park/recreation area and be as specific as possible in describing anticipated employment and economic opportunities.

Project Engagement and Participation – 15 points:

This criterion will assess the level and degree of active partnership building in support of the project among the local project sponsor, members of the public (particularly residents that would be served by the park and neighborhood groups), local government(s), and the private sector (including community organizations and businesses). In particular, the panel will evaluate the extent to which the project was developed with local neighborhood and/or community participation, input, and engagement, especially through or with the assistance of organizations that assist governments and communities with revitalization.

Priority will be given to projects that can demonstrate that there has been and continues to be a deliberate initiative or effort by the project sponsor and/or its partner(s) to engage residents of the target neighborhood(s) in the project’s development. Further, where there is a substantial level of collaboration among the public and private sectors, including multiple levels of government, private/non-profit organizations, and community groups.

Innovation and Transformative Attributes – 10 points:

This criterion will assess the degree to which the project encompasses or exhibits innovation, especially in ways that can be transformative for the neighborhood(s) and community in terms of revitalization. These qualities could be related to aspects such as: redevelopment of a blighted or distressed property; involvement of new or non-traditional partners; unusual features in the project design; employment of novel solutions to issues in/challenges to addressing the community’s recreation needs; the ability to affect or advance other complementary and intrinsic benefits beyond providing new or enhancing park or other outdoor recreation spaces; and other similar characteristics.

This is a somewhat open-ended criterion but is an opportunity for project sponsors to describe and promote features of the project that go above and beyond the recreation services or opportunities the project will provide. Priority will be given to projects that demonstrate unique features that make them stand out relative to the other proposals submitted for the competition as well as the “typical” LWCF project.

Part II: Technical Merit and Qualification of Applicants (Technical panel, 15 points total)

1. Project’s Alignment with SCORP and other applicable plans – 5 points:

This criterion will assess the degree to which the project advances or is otherwise tied to the priority recreation needs and/or goals of the applicable state’s SCORP and other relevant park and recreation plans. Projects can also receive credit for aligning with or advancing priorities of other comprehensive or master plans at the city, regional, and/or state level such as community revitalization, economic development, or open space plans.

Priority will be given to projects that meet clearly identified goals and/or needs in the SCORP, particularly any that are specific to urban areas, together with other applicable planning documents at different levels of government and/or private sector initiatives.

1. Project Readiness – 5 points:

This criterion will assess the status of the project to evaluate the readiness to be implemented, the likelihood of successful execution, and the viability of the period of performance for the project’s execution.

Priority will be given to projects that are well into or mostly done with the planning stages such that implementation can likely begin within one year and the project could be opened to the public within 2 to 3 years.

1. Applicant and Partner Capacity – 5 points:

This criterion will assess the ability and likelihood of the project sponsor and partner(s) (if applicable) to initiate and successfully complete the project as well as effectively manage and sustain the park or recreation area to ensure long-term viability, particularly in the context of LWCF requirements. Also, assesses the project sponsor and/or partner’s demonstrated capacity for appropriate grant management and successful compliance with grant conditions, particularly with past LWCF and/or other federal grants (if applicable).

Priority will be given to projects where the sponsor and/or partner(s) have experience with federal grants and have successfully completed similar projects with no problems complying with grant regulations or program-specific terms and conditions; and where there appears to be capacity for successful long term park management and protection. If the sponsor is a past LWCF grant recipient, the sponsor does not have any known outstanding Section 6(f)(3) conversion issues that are not in the process of resolution.

Part III – Financial Support and Leveraging (Technical panel, 25 points total)

1. Viability and reasonableness of the project’s budget – 10 points:

This criterion will assess the eligibility and reasonableness of the costs included in the project’s budget, whether the budget seems realistic for the scope of work, and the availability of or firmness of commitments for the full amount of funds needed to complete the project, including any match commitment(s) that exceed the 1:1 requirement.

Priority will be given to project proposals with clear and detailed budgets that contain all or mostly LWCF-eligible cost items that are reasonable and obviously related to the scope of the work for which the grant funds are specifically being requested. Priority will also be given to projects where funding to cover the entire project budget is mostly in place (excluding the grant amount), particularly any amounts promised as overmatch.

1. Partner Support and Leveraging – 15 points:

This criterion will assess the degree to which the project is or will be supported by partnerships with the public, private, and/or non-profit sectors through contributions of money, land, supplies, services, etc., and the extent of financial leveraging of the federal share with non-federal public, private, and/or non-profit resources that allow the project budget to exceed the 1:1 match required by the LWCF Act.

Priority will be given to projects involving multiple and diverse partnerships that have resulted in contributions of financial resources, particularly non-public resources; and that exceed the minimum 1:1 match level primarily with LWCF-eligible costs.

# 2. Review and Selection Process

Once a pre-application has been received from a State lead agency, the NPS LWCF program office will conduct an initial screening to determine whether the application is complete (i.e., at a minimum contains all Required Elements) and meets basic eligibility requirements (i.e., project is from an eligible applicant and/or sponsor, provides the minimum cost share, and its purpose is generally consistent with the LWCF Act and the objectives of this competition). Presuming it is found to be eligible for consideration, the project will be evaluated and scored in a field review conducted by both a technical panel of NPS staff focused mainly on LWCF-based requirements and a peer-based merit panel focused mainly on the project’s purpose, purported benefits, and relevance to the competition objectives. (See Section E.1 to see which criteria each panel will review.) All proposals will be scored individually in accordance with the assigned weights of the evaluation criteria. Each proposal will be reviewed by at least 4 (four) reviewers but no consensus advice will be given. Both federal and non-federal experts may be used for the merit panel. Reviewers’ scores will be compiled and averaged as needed to create a final score.

The scores and reviewer evaluations will be used by the competition managers to produce a ranked list of projects that will be recommended to the competition’s selecting official – the Director of the National Park Service – for final selection. Generally, projects will be recommended in the ranked order unless there is justification to select out of order based upon:

* Availability of funding
* Geographic distribution of projects and/or funds
* Program objective and priorities (see Section A of this NOFO)
* The applicant’s prior performance in managing LWCF grants and/or assisted sites
* The project’s capacity to leverage non-Federal dollars.

The NPS will then request complete and final grant applications (see following Sections E.3 and Section F).

**3. Evaluation of Recipient Risk**

In accordance with 2 C.F.R. § 200.205, applications selected for funding will be subject to a
pre-award risk assessment, which may include a review of information contained within the applicant’s proposal, past audits, Federal Awardee Performance and Integrity Information System (FAPIIS), and/or past performance on previous Federal financial assistance awards. Negative information that leads to a recipient being designated as “Medium Risk” or “High Risk” may result in specific conditions, as identified in 2 C.F.R. § 200.207, being incorporated into the final award.

If the Federal share of the project cost is anticipated to be over $150,000.00, prior to making a Federal award, any information about the applicant that is in the designated integrity and performance (currently FAPIIS) will be reviewed and considered (see 41 U.S.C. § 2313). Applicants may review and comment about any information about itself in FAPIIS. The Federal awarding agency will consider any comments by the applicant, in addition to the other information in the designated integrity and performance system, in making a judgment about the applicant's integrity, business ethics, and record of performance under Federal awards when completing the review of risk posed by applicants as described in 2 C.F.R. §200.205

# 3. Anticipated Announcement and Federal Award Dates

The DNR will review applications submitted and conduct an initial review and evaluation to select the top three candidates to be submitted for competition in the National Program. Additional consideration will be given to applicants that do not have a current grant award under this program.

The NPS anticipates making an announcement about preliminary selection of projects by March 1, 2019. Once this selection has been made, the State lead agencies for the selected projects will be directed to work with the sponsors to prepare the final grant applications. Final applications will be submitted by the DNR to the NPS via Grants.gov.

# VI. Agency Contacts

**DNR Division of Parks and Trails Contact(s)**

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