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Section 1: Introduction

In this section, you’ll learn about:

- The Land and Water Conservation Fund program
- Where to get information
- The grant process and timeline

The Land and Water Conservation Fund Program

In 1965, Congress passed the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) Act, which authorized the Secretary of the Interior to provide financial assistance to the states for the acquisition and development of public outdoor recreation areas and facilities.

Obtaining and managing an LWCF grant requires the highest level of preparation from the applicant and the highest level of due diligence from a successful grant recipient. No matter the amount of money or relative share of LWCF funds in a given project, LWCF rules apply to the entire funded project, forever.

Money for the program comes from several federal sources: Leases of offshore oil and gas resources, recreation fees, sales of surplus real property, and motorboat fuel taxes.

Program Administration

The National Park Service, within the U.S. Department of the Interior, manages this federal grant program. The National Park Service ultimately receives and approves all project applications, agreements, and amendments.

In Washington State, the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board administers the LWCF program. The board is a governor-appointed board composed of five citizens and the directors (or designees) of three state agencies – Department of Fish and Wildlife,
Section 1: Introduction

Department of Natural Resources, and Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission.

The Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) supports the board. RCO is a small state agency that manages multiple grant programs to create outdoor recreation opportunities, protect the best of the state's wildlife habitat and farmland, and help return salmon from near extinction.


Where to Get Information

Recreation and Conservation Office:
Natural Resources Building
1111 Washington Street
Olympia, WA 98501
E-mail: info@rco.wa.gov
Telephone: (360) 902-3000
Fax: (360) 902-3026
TTD: (360) 902-1996
Web site: www.rco.wa.gov

Mailing Address
PO Box 40917
Olympia, WA 98504-0917

Department of the Interior National Park Service:
Seattle Support Office
909 First Avenue
Seattle, WA 98104-1060
Telephone: (206) 220-4000
Fax: (206) 220-4161
Web site: www.nps.gov/lwcf

RCO grant managers are available to answer questions about this manual and grant program. Please feel free to call.

Other Publications You Will Need

Depending on the type of project submitted, grant participants should be familiar with the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board manuals listed below. The manuals are available on the RCO Web site and each can be made available in an alternative format.

- Manual 2, Planning Policies and Guidelines
- Manual 3, Acquisition Projects
- Manual 4, Development Projects
- Manual 5, Restoration Projects
Section 1: Introduction

- *Manual 7, Long-Term Obligations*
- *Manual 8, Reimbursements*


**Grant Process and Timeline**

RCO offers grants in even years, in conjunction with the state budget. The grant process, from application to grant award, spans 18 months, and is outlined below. While the order of the steps in this process remains consistent, for precise dates, visit the RCO Web site.

**Even-numbered Years**

**Workshops.** RCO conducts workshops (usually as an online meeting) in the winter or early spring to provide information about the grant programs offered that year.

**Entering Applications.** RCO strongly encourages applicants to start the online application early. Applicants log into PRISM Online and select the “Get Started/Start a New Application” button to enter grant application information. RCO uses this information to assign an outdoor grants manager. This manager guides applicants through the process, reviews application materials, helps determine whether proposals are eligible, and may visit the project site to discuss site-specific details.

**Planning Deadline.** March 1 is the planning deadline for all programs. This ensures applicants complete the planning process before applying for grants. Agencies that apply for grants in the same year that their planning eligibility expires must ensure that their planning eligibility extends through the board meeting in which the projects first are considered.

Eligible applicants are listed on RCO’s Web site. To verify or establish eligibility for a specific grant program, contact RCO’s planning specialist.

**Applications Due.** Applications are due in early May of even-numbered years. The application includes the data entered into PRISM and all required attachments. Applicants should “submit” the application before the deadline. The “Check Application for Errors” button on the Submit Application screen will indicate which pages are incomplete. Incomplete applications and applications received after the deadline will be returned unless RCO’s director has approved a late submission in advance.

**Technical Reviews.** Applicants will be invited to a technical review meeting, where they present their projects to the LWCF advisory committee and RCO staff, who review projects to ensure they are eligible, identify any issues of concern, and provide feedback.
on the strengths and weaknesses of each proposal. Applicants make an oral presentation, illustrated with maps, graphics, and photographs using PowerPoint.®. Grants managers will review the applications also and send comments to applicants. Applicants then can make changes to improve the projects, if needed. Applicants must complete all changes by the technical completion deadline.

**Technical Completion Deadline.** RCO will establish a technical completion deadline by which applicants must make all changes to their applications. After this date, applicants will not be able to make any further changes. RCO will score applicable evaluation criteria as of this date.

**Board Submits Biennial Budget Request.** The Recreation and Conservation Funding Board submits to the Governor a recommended funding amount for the next biennium for LWCF.

**Project Evaluation.** Applicants make an oral presentation, illustrated with maps, graphics, and photographs in PowerPoint®, to the LWCF advisory committee, which scores each proposal against a set of criteria approved by the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board.

**Post-Evaluation Conference.** After project evaluations, RCO staff tabulate the scores and share the results with the advisory committee. The committee discusses the preliminary ranked list and the application and evaluation processes. The public may join this advisory committee conference call; however, to ensure a fair and equitable process; guests may not testify. Shortly after the conference call, staff post the preliminary ranked lists on RCO’s Web site. The resulting ranked list of projects is the basis for the funding recommendation to the board.

**Odd-numbered Years**

**Legislature Approves Funding Authority.** When it develops the state capital budget, the Legislature considers the potential federal funds that may be awarded to Washington State for the LWCF program and approves funding authority for RCO.

**Proof of Matching Funds.** Applicants must provide proof of the availability of matching funds by the match certification deadline, which is at least one calendar month before board approval of funding.¹

**Board Approves Ranked List and Funding.** After the Legislature and Governor approve the capital budget, the board approves the list of projects and the final grant awards, in an open public meeting, after considering the recommendations of the advisory board.

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¹ Washington Administrative Code 286-13-040(3)
committee, written public comments submitted before the meeting, and public testimony at the meeting. Applicants are encouraged, but not required, to attend.

**Pre-agreement Materials.** After grant awards, applicants have 60 days to submit pre-agreement documents (checklist provided by grants managers). These materials may include:

- Control and tenure documentation (deeds or easements).
- Copy of issued Army Corps of Engineers permit, if required.
- Section 6(f)(3) boundary map (signed and dated). See Page 24.
- Proposal Description Environmental Screening Form. See Page 22.
- Project milestones.
- Federal assurances (Standard Form 424B or D).

RCO staff prepare the applications, which include the pre-agreement materials, for submittal to the National Park Service for its review.

Upon approval by the National Park Service, RCO staff then prepare and issue the grant contracts, called project agreements. Applicants must return the signed agreements within 90 days\(^2\). Once the agreements are signed, the applicants, now referred to as project sponsors, may begin their projects, per the terms of the project agreements. Each agreement will be written and monitored for compliance by RCO staff. See *Manual 7*, *Long-term Obligations* for more information.

**Pre-agreement Costs.** RCO will pay only for work performed after project agreements have been signed by both RCO and project sponsors with two exceptions:

- Expenses, such as preliminary designs, environmental assessments, construction plans and specifications, cultural resource surveys, and permits, all of which are incurred within 3 years of the application being approved by the National Park Service.

- Real property acquired under a Waiver of Retroactivity approved by RCO and the National Park Service.

Construction performed before the execution of a project agreement and compliance with federal laws, such as Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act and the

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National Environmental Policy Act will not be eligible for payment and may jeopardize funding for the entire project.

Successful Applicants’ Workshop. After the board approves funding, RCO hosts a workshop for successful grant applicants. This workshop covers:

- Project sponsor responsibility for compliance with the terms of the project agreement.
- Amending the project agreement to address project changes, time extensions, scope modifications, special conditions, and cost increases.
- Land acquisition, including tools developed to assist applicants through the acquisition procedures for state and federal grants.
- Development and restoration, including construction plans and specifications, barrier-free design requirements, cultural resources, and bid procedures.
- Planning, including deliverables and reporting requirements.
- Project implementation, including meeting milestones, permitting, submitting progress reports, inspections, valuing donations, using RCO’s online resources for understanding billing procedures, project close-out, and long-term compliance.

Ongoing

Project Implementation. Grant recipients must complete projects promptly. To help ensure reasonable and timely project completion, accountability, and the proper use of funds, applicants will:

- Submit only projects that will be completed within 4 years of the grant award.
- Provide assurances that the project can be completed within a reasonable time frame, which does not exceed the implementation period approved by the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board.
- Develop milestones for project implementation that does not exceed 4 years.
- Begin project implementation quickly and aggressively to show measurable progress towards meeting project milestones.
- Submit progress reports at intervals as designated by the RCO project agreement.

RCO may terminate projects that do not meet critical milestones established in the project agreement.
By June 1 of each year, RCO will review the status of projects incomplete 3 or more years from the date of funding approval. RCO will ask sponsors to provide assurances that their projects will be completed on time, such as:

- Executed purchase and sale agreements.
- Proof of permitting approvals.
- Awarded construction contracts.
- Progress on other significant milestones listed in the grant agreement.

If satisfactory assurances are not provided, the director may terminate the project.

**Project Completion.** When a project is completed, sponsors have 90 days to submit the final bill, final report, and supporting documents needed to close the project. If the bill and documentation are not submitted within 6 months of the end date within the agreement, the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board may terminate the project without payment.
Section 2: Policies

In this section, you’ll learn about:

✓ Policy direction
✓ Eligible applicants
✓ Planning requirements
✓ Eligible projects
✓ Typical projects
✓ Requirements and other things to know
✓ Permits and forms
✓ Map requirements
✓ Signs
✓ Project area stewardship and ongoing obligations

Policy Direction

LWCF has two, integrated sets of policies. The first are the policies of the Department of Interior’s National Park Service, as described in the federal LWCF manual. The second are the policies of the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board, which focus on project selection, contract management, and enforcement of federal requirements. If the policies conflict or are unclear, federal policy will supersede board policy.

Eligible Applicants

Grants may be made to:

• Cities and towns
• Counties
• Native American tribes
• Park and recreation districts
• School districts
• State agencies
• Certain other special purpose districts such as port and public utility districts are eligible if legally authorized to acquire and develop public open space, habitat, or recreation facilities.

**Legal Opinion First-time Applicants**

The Recreation and Conservation Funding Board requires all organizations wishing to apply for a grant for the first time to submit a legal opinion that the applicant is eligible to do the following activities. Note that the legal opinion is required only once to establish eligibility.

• Receive and expend public funds including funds from the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board;
• Contract with the State of Washington and/or the United States of America;
• Meet any statutory definitions required for Recreation and Conservation Funding Board grant programs;
• Acquire and manage interests in real property for conservation or outdoor recreation purposes;
• Develop and/or provide stewardship for structures or facilities eligible under board rules or policies;
• Undertake planning activities incidental thereto; and
• Commit the applicant to statements made in any grant proposal.

**Not Eligible**

• Private individuals and organizations are not eligible for grants under this program, even if they are non-profit or charitable organizations.
• Any grantee, subgrantee, or contractor of any grantee or subgrantee that has been debarred or suspended under Executive Order 12549.
Past Performance

Applicants will be evaluated in part on their past performances, if applicable, in managing LWCF grants.

Planning Requirements

Each applicant must submit a plan that includes several elements, including goals and objectives, inventory, demand and need analysis, and a public involvement process. The plan must be accepted by RCO by March 1 in even-numbered years. Once RCO accepts the plan, the applicant is eligible to apply for grants for up to 6 years from the date the applicant organization adopted the plan. It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that the plan documentation provided to RCO is current. See Manual 2, Planning Policies and Guidelines for more information.

Statewide Outdoor Recreation Planning Process

To be eligible for grants, projects must be in accord with Washington's Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP), which the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board has produced since 1967. The board uses the plan to establish funding priorities. To see a copy of the plan, visit the RCO Web site at www.rco.wa.gov/doc_pages/strategy.shtml.

Eligible Projects

The following types of projects are eligible for funding:

Acquisition Projects

Acquisition includes buying land, water, or easements. Easements must provide perpetual public access and use. Properties must be developed within 3 years.

Eligible Acquisition Costs

The only eligible property costs include:

- Direct costs for the purchase of real property and interests in real property for public outdoor recreation. Public access to the property is required. Projects may include acquisition of structures and improvements that (a) are to be used primarily for outdoor recreation or outdoor recreation support activities, or (b) are part of the outdoor recreation area to be acquired, and are to be removed or

3 Washington Administrative Code 286-13-040(2)
demolished. Project sponsors must list all improvements and their proposed use or disposition in applications. The National Park Service will determine the eligibility of structures proposed for acquisition.

The only eligible incidental costs include:

- Relocation and relocation administration allowable under the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies, P.L. 94-646
- Cultural resources (survey, excavation, onsite monitoring, data recovery, and other costs)
- National Environmental Policy Act compliance (e.g., hazardous substances review, wetland delineations, biological surveys, etc.)

All other incidental costs related to the acquisition of real property are ineligible. Additional rules for land acquisition are in Manual 3, Acquisition Projects.

Ineligible Acquisition Projects

The following are not eligible for LWCF funding:

- Acquisition of historic sites and structures
- Acquisition of museums and sites to be used for museums or primarily for archeological excavations
- Acquisition of land to help meet a public school’s minimum site size requirement, as established by state or local regulations
- Acquisition of areas and facilities designed to be used primarily for semi-professional and professional arts and athletics
- Acquisition of areas and facilities to be used solely for game refuges or fish production purposes
- Acquisition of areas to be used mainly for the construction of indoor facilities, except for covered swimming pools and ice rinks if the location meets federal climate criteria
- Acquisition of railroad “hardware,” trestles, stations, yards, etc.
- Acquisition of sites containing luxury lodges, motels, cabins, and similar elaborate facilities, which are to be operated by the project sponsor or a concessionaire to serve recreationists with food and sleeping quarters
• Acquisition of agricultural land primarily for preservation in agricultural purposes
• Acquisition of federal surplus property unless legislatively authorized in a specific situation
• Acquisition of scholastic and intercollegiate facilities
• Lands acquired from the federal government at less than fair market value

Appraisal Standards for Acquisitions

The Uniform Appraisal Standards of Federal Land Acquisitions\(^4\), commonly called the “Yellow Book” must be used to prepare appraisals and appraisal reviews. This requirement applies to new projects and to land transactions that occur as a result of a conversion.

Uniform Relocation and Acquisition

Real property acquisitions with LWCF grants must be made in accordance with the applicable provisions of Public Law 91-646, the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970, as amended.

In addition to real property acquisitions, the Uniform Relocation and Assistance Act requirements also apply to conversions and development grants (if the property was acquired within the past 5 years).

Buying Land before an RCO Project Agreement is Approved

Under most conditions, RCO only will pay for expenses that occur when the project agreement is active. However, a project sponsor may get approval from the National Park Service and RCO to cover land acquisitions costs incurred before the project agreement was signed. To do this, the project sponsor must request, before buying property rights, a waiver of retroactivity.\(^5\) The waiver may be requested only when immediate action is necessary and the grant won’t be awarded in time. When a waiver is approved, it allows the sponsor to acquire the property in advance of a signed project agreement without forfeiting eligibility. Approval of a waiver does not however, guarantee funding. When approved, a waiver is good for 1 year plus the balance of the next federal fiscal year from the date of issue. For additional information and to learn what materials to submit for a waiver of retroactivity request, please refer to Manual 3: Acquisition Projects.

\(^4\) This publication is revised annually and can be found on the Appraisal Foundation’s Web site at www.appraisalfoundation.org/s_appraisal/index.asp
\(^5\) Washington Administrative Code 286-13-085
Acquisition for Delayed Development

Grants may be available to buy land for future development of outdoor recreation facilities. In the interim between acquisition and development, the property must be open for those public recreation purposes that the land is capable of supporting, or which can be achieved with minimum public investment. Planned development must occur on the property within 3 years from the date of acquisition.

If development will be delayed more than 3 years from the date of acquisition, the project sponsor must include the following information at the time of application:

- Why immediate acquisition of the property is necessary
- What facilities will be developed and when
- The type of recreation access that will be provided during the interim period
- What, if any, non-recreational uses will be continued on the property and when will they be terminated
- Assurance that any income derived by the project sponsor for the non-recreation activities will be used in accordance with federal LWCF rules.
- Assurance that non-recreational uses will be terminated within 3 years from the date of acquisition

Development Projects

Development projects may include construction or renovation of public outdoor recreation facilities and support amenities such as parking, restrooms, walkways, and landscaping. Grants for development projects also may cover demolition, site preparation, architectural and engineering services, and similar activities that are essential to complete the proposed project scope.

Eligible Development Costs

Examples of public outdoor recreation facilities and support amenities that are eligible for LWCF funding include:

- Athletic fields
- Campgrounds (including overnight recreational facility structures\(^6\))

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\(^6\) See [Manual 4, Development Projects](#) for specific details.
• Community gardens
• Equestrian facilities, such as rodeo arenas
• Golf courses
• Hard court areas, such as skate parks, tennis courts, and basketball courts
• Marine facilities (motorized and nonmotorized boating, water access, etc.)
• Natural areas, open space
• Outdoor interpretive facilities including kiosks and signs
• Picnic sites (including picnic shelters)
• Playgrounds and spraygrounds
• Shooting and archery ranges
• Ski areas, ice skating rinks\(^7\), snowmobile facilities
• Swim beaches and pools\(^8\)
• Support facilities such as parking, restrooms, permanent spectator seating, storage, landscaping, and utilities, unless they exclusively serve ineligible facilities
• Trails (including interpretive) and pathways
• Vistas and view points
• Wildlife management areas (fishing or hunting)

**Ineligible Development Projects**

The following are not eligible for LWCF funding:

• Animal species introduction or propagation, other than biological controls for invasive species, etc.

• Areas or facilities designed primarily for semi-professional arts or athletics, such as outdoor theaters or professional rodeo arenas

\(^7\) Ice skating rinks and swimming pools may be covered or completely enclosed if they meet climate criteria (see federal LWCF handbook), but limited funds are available for such projects.

\(^8\) See Manual 4, Development Projects for specific details.
• Facilities designated for specific groups or where certain groups will be given priority access (i.e., marine facilities, group camps, etc.)

• Fish or wildlife production facilities, such as fish hatcheries for the production of sport fish populations.

• Indoor facilities such as community centers, environmental education or learning centers, gymnasiums, swimming and therapy pools, and ice skating rinks.

• Mobile recreation units including portable bleachers, skatemobiles, playmobiles

• Multi-site acquisition projects.

• Renovation due to inadequate maintenance during the reasonable life of the facility

• Restoration or preservation of historic structures.

• Specific projects identified as mitigation as part of a habitat conservation plan approved by the federal government for incidental take of endangered or threatened species, or other projects identified for habitat mitigation purposes. Also see RCO Manuals 3, Acquisition Projects and Manual 4, Development Projects for exceptions.

Development of Lands Recently Acquired

If land was acquired within the past 5 years, development with LWCF grants must be made in accordance with the applicable provisions of Public Law 91-646, the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970, as amended.

Development Project Design Requirements

Plans for development should be based on public need, expected use, and the type and character of the project area. Facilities should be attractive for public use and generally consistent with the environment. Emphasis should be given to the health and safety of users, accessibility to the general public, and protection of the recreation and natural values of the area.

Development on Public School Grounds

Project sponsors may develop facilities on land they own if they can ensure perpetual public use. When they develop facilities on public school grounds, the following conditions also apply:
• Outdoor recreation areas and facilities for use by the public and by public schools, including colleges and universities, are eligible for grants if they are not part of the normal and usual program and responsibility of the school system.

• Stadiums, stadium-like seating, and portable bleachers are not eligible for grants.

• Facilities needed solely to meet the physical education and athletic program requirements of a school are not eligible for grants. However, the school system may have exclusive use of facilities such as athletic fields, tennis courts, and swimming pools, at certain times for instruction or competition if the public outdoor recreation use remains primary, and there is adequate public access at other times.

Include in the grant application a schedule of the time the facility will be open to the public. Additionally, adequate signs must be installed at the site, before the final payment on the project, indicating when the facilities are open to the public. See Manual 4, Development Projects for more information about control of the land.

Ineligible Development Costs

• Bonus payments of any kind

• Ceremonial or entertainment expenses

• Charges for contingency or other similar reserves

• Charges for deficits or overdrafts

• Charges incurred contrary to the policies of the sponsor

• Charges in excess of the lowest bid when competitive bidding is required

• Costs not directly related to implementing the project such as indirect and overhead charges, or unrelated mitigation.

• Costs of discounts not taken

• Damage judgments whether determined by judicial decision, arbitration, or otherwise

• Donations or contributions made by the project sponsor, such as to a charitable organization

• Employee facilities, including residences, appliances, office equipment, furniture, etc.
• Environmental cleanup of illegal activities (i.e., removal of contaminated materials or derelict vessels, trash pickup, methamphetamine labs, etc.).

• Expenses for publicity

• Fines and penalties

• Interest expenses

• Items not listed in the project scope

• Legal, professional fees paid in connection with raising funds

• Losses arising from uncollectible accounts and other claims and related costs

• Operation and maintenance costs of recreational areas and facilities

• Salaries and expenses of the chief executive of the project sponsor (mayor, etc.) or the local government body (city, county, etc.)

• Support facilities that exclusively serve ineligible facilities

• Taxes that the project sponsor would not have been liable to pay

**Combination Projects**

Combination projects involve acquisition and facility development or renovation. To help ensure timely completion of these projects, at least 1 month before the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board considers approving funding, applicants must secure the property by one of the following methods:

• Acquisition under the Waiver of Retroactivity policies and procedures ([Manual 3, Acquisition Projects](#)).

• Have property in escrow pending grant approval. Closing must occur within 90 days after the funding meeting.

• Obtain an option on the property that extends past the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board funding meeting. Execution of the option must occur within 90 days after this meeting.

If the acquisition is for less than fee interest, and if not acquired already via a Waiver of Retroactivity, applicants also must provide draft copies of all leases or easements to RCO for review. Execution of the leases or easements must occur within 90 days after the funding meeting.
For the acquisitions to remain eligible, sponsors must follow all of the requirements and procedures outlined in Manual 3, Acquisition Projects.

**Phased Projects**

The Recreation and Conservation Funding Board recommends that applicants discuss phasing very expensive or complex projects with RCO staff. Phased projects are subject to the following parameters:

- Approval of any single phase is limited to that phase. No approval or endorsement is given or implied toward future phases.

- Each phase must stand on its merits as a viable or complete recreation experience and is not dependent on the completion of future phases or work.

- Each phase must be submitted as a separate application.

Progress and sponsor performance on previously funded project phases may be considered by the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board when making decisions on current project proposals.

If two or more projects are ranked equally through the evaluation process, the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board will give preference to a project that has had a previous phase funded by the board.

**Typical Projects**

Examples of public park facilities that are eligible for LWCF funding include:

- Athletic fields
- Campgrounds (including overnight recreational facility structures[^9])
- Community gardens
- Equestrian facilities, such as rodeo arenas
- Golf courses
- Hard court areas, such as skate parks, tennis courts, and basketball courts
- Marine facilities (motorized and nonmotorized boating, water access, etc.)

[^9]: See Manual 4, Development Projects for specific details.
• Natural areas, open space
• Outdoor interpretive facilities including kiosks and signs
• Picnic sites (including picnic shelters)
• Playgrounds and spraygrounds
• Shooting and archery ranges
• Ski areas, ice skating rinks\textsuperscript{10}, snowmobile facilities
• Swim beaches and pools\textsuperscript{11}
• Support facilities such as parking, restrooms, storage, and utilities, unless they exclusively serve ineligible facilities
• Trails (including interpretive) and pathways
• Vistas and view points
• Wildlife management areas (fishing or hunting)

\section*{Requirements and Other Things to Know}

\section*{Not a Public Hearings Board}

The Recreation and Conservation Funding Board is not a public hearings board and does not decide land use issues. To the extent possible, all project proposals should demonstrate adequate public notification and review and have the support of the public body applying for the grant.

\section*{Nondiscrimination}

RCO activities are intended to follow state and federal guidelines for nondiscrimination. If you believe RCO or its programs are discriminatory, express concern to the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board, or the Equal Opportunity Program, U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1849 C Street N.W., Room 2733, Washington, D.C. 20040.

\textsuperscript{10} Ice skating rinks and swimming pools may be covered or completely enclosed if they meet climate criteria (see federal LWCF handbook), but limited funds are available for such projects.\textsuperscript{11} See \textit{Manual 4, Development Projects} for specific details.
Universal-Barrier Free Access

Sponsors must ensure that all facilities paid for with Recreation and Conservation Funding Board grants meet current barrier-free standards. Several laws and codes provide construction designs that meet these standards. Facilities not covered by these laws and codes are not exempt from barrier-free access. Sponsors must, to the highest degree reasonable, make project elements accessible. See the Universal, Barrier-Free Access section in Manual 4, Development Projects and the RCO Web site.

Plans, project applications, cost estimates, and construction drawings must reflect compliance with facility access and signing requirements.

Sustainability

The Recreation and Conservation Funding Board encourages greater use of sustainable design, practices, and elements in projects. To the board, “sustainability” means to help fund a recreation or conservation project that minimizes impact to the natural environment while maximizing the project’s service life.

Sponsors are encouraged to incorporate sustainable design, practices, and elements into the scope of a project. Examples may include use of recycled materials; native plants in landscaping; pervious surfacing material for pathways, trails, and parking areas; energy efficient fixtures; onsite recycling stations; and composting.

Landowner Acknowledgement of Application

As part of any grant application for acquisition of real property, the project sponsor must demonstrate that the landowner is aware of the project sponsor’s interest in purchasing property rights. Applicants may meet this requirement by completing one of four options as detailed in RCO Manual 3, Acquisition Projects.

Control of the Land

To protect investments made by the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board and to assure public access to those investments, sponsors must have adequate control of project sites to construct, operate, and maintain the areas for the term required by the grant program and project agreement. This “control and tenure” may be through land ownership, a lease, or easement. See Manual 4, Development Projects for more information.

Project sponsors may develop facilities on land they own or on land where they have less-than-fee interests, such as easements, if their rights to the land provide permanent public access and control of the property commensurate with the proposed development and the land can be placed under Section 6(f)(3) protection. All less-than-
fee interests must be described in the Proposal Description and Environmental Screening Form (described below) and indicated on the Section 6(f) boundary map required in the application.

No approval will be given for the development of facilities on leased land unless the land meets one of the following circumstances:

- The land is leased from the federal government with no less than 25 years remaining on the lease, and the lease is not revocable at will.

- The land is leased from one public agency to another for 25 years or more and there are safeguards included to adequately ensure perpetual use. See the National Park Service’s LWCF manual.

**Projects on State-owned Aquatic Lands**

If a project will occur over or in a navigable body of water, an authorization to use state-owned aquatic lands may be needed.

All marine waters are, by definition, navigable, as are portions of rivers influenced by tides. Navigable rivers and lakes are those determined by the judiciary, those bounded by meander lines, or those that could have been used for commerce at the time of statehood. The Department of Natural Resources’ aquatic land managers will help the grant applicant determine if the project will fall on state-owned aquatic lands and provide more information on its authorization process. See the land manager coverage map online at www.dnr.wa.gov/Publications/aqr_land_manager_map.pdf for contact information for the Department of Natural Resources aquatics land managers.

If the project is on state-owned aquatic lands, the grant applicant will need to secure a lease or easement to use those lands from the Washington Department of Natural Resources. The lease or easement may take up to a year to receive. RCO requires the executed lease or easement within 60 days after board funding approval to show control and tenure for the site. The lease or easement is required before the project will be placed under agreement, unless RCO’s director approves in advance.

The following online resources may be helpful to review:

- *Grant Projects on State-owned Aquatic Lands* at www.dnr.wa.gov/Publications/em_fs11_018.pdf


- *Boundaries of State-owned Aquatic Lands* at www.dnr.wa.gov/Publications/aqr_aquatic_land_boundaries.pdf
You Have to Pay First

RCO pays grants through reimbursement. You may request reimbursement only after you have paid your employees and vendors. RCO does not provide money before vendors are paid. RCO will not pay more than the grant recipient’s “out-of-pocket” costs. Billing procedures are explained further in Manual 8, Reimbursements.

Project Agreement

If funds from LWCF have been recommended for the project, it will be necessary for RCO to submit an application to the National Park Service. The project agreement between the board and the sponsor must not be executed by RCO until federal approval is received.

The general provisions of the National Park Service are referenced in the project agreement (Standard Terms and Conditions, Section 29) apply to all approved projects using LWCF.

Permits and Forms

Corps Permits

Sponsors of projects that require any Army Corps of Engineers permit must provide a copy of the issued permit within 90 days of the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board’s approval of the project or the project will not be funded. Due to the long lead time for obtaining a Corps permit, sponsors may need to start this process before obtaining a signed grant agreement.

Proposal Description and Environmental Screening Form

Project sponsors must review their projects for potential environmental impacts by following the National Environmental Policy Act, which coordinates federal, state, and local environmental requirements. To facilitate and document this coordination, states must ensure that the LWCF Proposal Description and Environmental Screening Form is completed and accompanies the request for federal funding.

The National Park Service encourages states and project sponsors to use the form as early as possible in the project planning process. Public involvement is required in the planning process.
Upon completion, the environmental screening form will indicate the resources that could be impacted by the project enabling states and project sponsors to follow an appropriate pathway for National Environmental Policy Act analysis:

- Recommendation for a categorical exclusion
- Production of an environmental assessment
- Production of an environmental impact statement

The environmental screening form also could be used to document earlier, yet still viable, environmental analysis of this federal proposal.

**National Historic Preservation Act, Section 106 Process**

The National Historic Preservation Act’s Section 106 requires project applications to be reviewed to determine if there will be any impact to historical properties. RCO begins this process by contacting the State Historic Preservation Office and Native American tribes. The State Historical Preservation Office then determines the potential impacts, defines the “area of potential affect,” and may request a cultural resources survey.

If a cultural resources survey is requested, the project sponsor must complete the survey. RCO forwards the survey to the State Historic Preservation Office, National Park Service, and interested Native American tribes for review and comment. RCO then forwards comments and the State Historic Preservation Office determination to the National Park Service for a final determination.

This review and the review under the National Environmental Policy Act are two separate, distinct processes. They can, and should, occur simultaneously. They should be coordinated to avoid duplication of public involvement or other requirements.

The Proposal Description and Environmental Screening Form must include a description of the research that was done, including the names of individuals, organizations, and sources contacted.

If research shows that cultural resources do exist, they must be identified and a description of how they will be protected included in the environmental assessment.

**Intergovernmental Review**

To receive LWCF grants, sponsors must notify directly state, area wide, and regional agencies, and local governments that would be affected by the project. This may be accomplished by publishing the project notice in the Federal Register or (preferred) by sending information directly to affected agencies. Such notices should include a detailed
description of the proposal, an address where comments may be forwarded, and the deadline for comment. A 60-day comment period is suggested.

Public Review

At a minimum, project sponsors are required to ensure the interested and affected public has had an opportunity to review and provide written comments on completed environmental assessments for LWCF proposals. This public comment period shall be no less than 30 days. The notice of environmental assessment is available for review and shall be published in the local newspapers and community notices, posted on the sponsoring agency’s Web site, and broadly made known to the public in such a way that interested and affected people have ample notice of the public comment period. The project sponsors are responsible for reviewing the public comments. These comments and the responses that address all substantive comments are to be included in the proposal’s submission to the National Park Service. If the proposal is revised in response to substantive public comments, or for any other reason, RCO should consult with the National Park Service to determine if the public needs another opportunity to review the revised environmental assessment.

Map Requirements

Project Boundaries – Section 6(F)(3) of the LWCF Act

Section 6(f)(3) of the LWCF Act contains provisions to protect federal investments and the quality of resources funded by grants. The law recognizes that changes in land use or development may make some grant-assisted areas obsolete over time, particularly in rapidly changing cities. At the same time, the law discourages casual “discards” of park and recreation facilities by ensuring that changes or “conversions from recreation use” will bear a cost – a cost that assures taxpayers that investments in the “national recreation estate” will not be squandered. The LWCF Act contains a clear provision to protect grant-assisted areas from conversions:

Section 6(f)(3): No property acquired or developed with assistance under this section shall, without the approval of the Secretary, be converted to other than public outdoor recreation uses. The Secretary shall approve such conversions only if he finds it to be in accord with the then existing comprehensive statewide outdoor recreation plan and only upon such conditions as he deems necessary to assure the substitution of other recreation properties of at least equal fair market value and of reasonably equivalent usefulness and location.

This requirement applies to all parks and other sites that have received LWCF grants of any type, whether for acquisition, development, or renovation of facilities. In many cases, even a small grant (e.g. for development of a picnic shelter) in a park of hundreds or even thousands of acres provides protection against conversion for the entire park.
To ensure the continued effectiveness of the law, several management tools have been developed to monitor and correct changes in assisted sites. For example, the National Park Service requires inspections of all grant-assisted areas and facilities at least once every five years.

**Boundary Map**

One of the most important attachments to the project application is the 6(f)(3) project boundary map. This map shows the park area to be covered by Section 6(f)(3) anti-conversion protections. This map, which must be submitted with every grant application, need not be a formal survey document, but should contain enough site-specific information to:

- Ensure that both the grant recipient and RCO agree on the property boundaries of the covered site at the time of the grant award.
- Provide location, size indicators, and a picture of key facilities and landmarks to help future project inspectors better identify and evaluate the site.

The project boundary should delineate clearly the area to be included under the conversion provisions of Section 6(f)(3) of the LWCF Act. All land within the project boundary must be dedicated in perpetuity to public outdoor recreation. At a minimum, this area must be a viable public outdoor recreation area that is capable of being self-sustaining without reliance on other areas not identified in the scope of the project. Except when the project sponsor can show that a smaller area is a self-sustaining outdoor recreation resource, the area to include within the boundary map will include the larger park, open space, or recreation area being developed or expanded. Any change of the land within the boundary for a use other than public outdoor recreation will require replacement of the converted land.

It is also helpful to provide a dated aerial photo with the project boundary lines.

**Map Specifications**

- Official park/site name and location
- LWCF and RCO project numbers
- Sufficient detail to legally identify the lands to be protected under Section 6(f)(3) of the LWCF Act. The following are acceptable methods for referencing property boundaries: deed references; adjoining ownerships; adjoining easements and rights-of-way; public streets; adjoining water bodies or other natural landmarks; metes and bounds; and surveys. Where one or more of the above methods are not readily suited for identifying the area, measurements from permanent locators may be used. A formal survey is not required.
• All known outstanding rights and interests in the boundary held by others. Known easements, deed/lease restrictions, reversionary interests, etc. are to be documented, including any area(s) under lease, name(s) of lessor and lessee, and term remaining on the lease(s).

• Approximate total acreage of the 6(f) area

• North arrow and scale

• Signature and date of the project sponsor

• Up to 11 inch x 17 inch format highly preferred

**Signs**

Signs must be posted at all acquisition and/or development projects funded by LWCF grants.

**Temporary Signs**

Temporary signs must be installed at all development projects from the start of construction until a permanent sign is installed. Project sponsors may delay installing signs at acquisition projects until the acquisition of all parcels and all relocations have occurred. Project sponsors must install a temporary sign on the completion of the final acquisition for at least six months or until replaced by a permanent sign.

Unless precluded by local sign ordinances, the minimum size of the signs will be 2 feet by 3 feet. There is no maximum size. A project sponsor may be reimbursed one-half the cost of a temporary sign if it's included in the project agreement as an allowable cost.

Temporary signs must contain the following information:

• Sponsoring agency name

• Public outdoor recreation site acquisition or development (*project name and description*)

• Aided by the Land and Water Conservation Fund

• Administered by Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office and the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior

• LWCF (dollar amount)

• Sponsoring agency match (dollar amount)
• Total project (dollar amount)

• LWCF revenue from outer continental shelf receipts, motorboat fuel tax, and sale of surplus federal properties

**Permanent Signs**

Federal guidelines require permanent signs acknowledging LWCF participation to be installed at all grant-assisted project sites. RCO may provide the signs.

**Project Area Stewardship and Ongoing Obligations**

Real property acquired, developed, or renovated using LWCF grants must be retained for public outdoor recreation use in perpetuity. The area to be retained is identified and described on a 6(f)(3) Boundary Map submitted by the applicant. This map is described on Page 24.

An RCO grant comes with long-term obligations to maintain and protect the project area after a project is complete. The long-term obligations for the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program are in state law\(^\text{12}\), the project agreement, and *Manual 7, Long-term Obligations*. A template of the project agreement may be found on RCO’s Web site at [www.rco.wa.gov/documents/manuals&forms/SampleProjAgreement.pdf](http://www.rco.wa.gov/documents/manuals&forms/SampleProjAgreement.pdf).

RCO recognizes that changes occur over time and that some facilities may become obsolete or the land needed for something else. The law discourages casual discards of land and facilities by ensuring that grant recipients replace the lost value when changes or conversions of use take place.

In general, the project area funded with an RCO grant must remain dedicated to the use as originally funded, such as outdoor recreation, for as long as defined in the project agreement. For acquisition projects, the period is determined by the rights that are acquired. For development and restoration projects, the period is determined by the type of control and tenure provided for the project.

A conversion occurs when the project area acquired, developed, or restored with RCO grant funding is used for purposes other than what it was funded for originally. See RCO *Manual 7, Long-term Obligations* for a discussion of conversions and the process required for replacement of the public investment. Non-compliance with the long-term obligations of an RCO grant may jeopardize an organization’s ability to obtain future RCO grants.

\(^{12}\) Revised Code of Washington 79A.15.030 (8) and Washington Administrative Codes 286.27.045, 286.27.055, 286.27.061, and 286.27.065
Section 3: Money Matters

In this section, you'll learn about:

✔ Matching resources
✔ Match requirements
✔ Types of match
✔ Grant limits
✔ Additional federal requirements
✔ Records and reimbursement

Matching Resources

Match is the project sponsor’s contribution to a project. Most Recreation and Conservation Funding Board programs require sponsors to match grants to meet statutory requirements, demonstrate a local commitment to the project, and to make funds available to a greater number of projects.

Eligible Match

A sponsor’s matching share may include one or a combination of the following:

- Appropriations and cash
- Bonds – council or voter
- Conservation futures
- Corrections labor
- Donations – the value of using cash, equipment use, labor, land, materials, property rights, or services (see note below)
• Force account – the value of using sponsor’s equipment, labor, or materials (see note below)

• Grants – federal, state, local and private (see notes below)

• Local impact and mitigation fees (see note below)

• Proceeds of a letter of credit or binding loan commitment

• Other Recreation and Conservation Funding Board grants that meet the requirements outlined below.

**Not Allowed as Match**

• Existing sponsor assets such as real property or developments.

• Costs that are double counted. (A cost incurred by a sponsor in a project that has been reimbursed by RCO shall not be used as a match on another RCO project.)

• Cost that are not eligible for grant assistance.

• Cost that are not necessary or an integral part of the project scope.

• Cost associated with meeting a mitigation requirement for another project or action (e.g., permit requirement, Federal Energy Regulatory Commission relicensing, Habitat Conservation Plan, legal settlement, etc.).

• Other federal funds, unless allowed by law or unless the statutory provisions of the other federal grant programs explicitly allow recipients to use the grants to match LWCF funds (see Chapter 5.A.5 of the federal LWCF manual).

**Match Requirements**

Recreation and Conservation Funding Board grants are intended to be the last source of funding for a project. In other words, before the board awards the grant, the required match must be secured so the project can move forward. Board grants also are intended to supplement the existing capacity of a sponsor, not to replace existing funding that would have been used for a project without grant funding.

All matching resources must be:

• An integral and necessary part of the approved project,

• Part of the work identified in the application and project agreement,

• For eligible work types or elements, and
• Committed to the project.

RCO rules governing projects apply to the grant applicant’s match. For example, if a grant applicant uses donated land as a match, RCO rules requiring the land to remain in recreation use forever apply to the donated land as well.

In many grant programs, particularly those where match is not required, the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board adopted evaluation criteria to encourage applicants to contribute matching shares. This typically is reflected in the criteria when points are given for non-governmental contributions or for exceeding the minimum match requirements. Applicants should carefully review the evaluation instrument to determine if this applies to your project.

Except for grant applications submitted within the same biennium, matching resources or board grant funds committed in one board-funded project must not be used as match in another board-funded project.

All Applicants

By law, applicants must provide a minimum match of 50 percent for each Land and Water Conservation Fund project.

Except for state agencies and Native American tribes, at least 10 percent of the total project cost must be provided in the form of a non-state, non-federal contribution.

Match Availability and Certification

To help ensure Recreation and Conservation Funding Board projects are ready for implementation upon approval, applicants must have matching funds available for expenditure before the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board approves funding. All applicants are required to sign and submit certification of match forms to ensure their projects are included in the funding recommendation. Applicants are advised to plan ahead for projects whose match depends on citizen votes or passage of ballot measure. This certification is due at least 30 days before Recreation and Conservation Funding Board action.\(^{13}\) The forms and deadlines for certifying match are on the RCO Web site.

RCO may declare projects ineligible if there is no guarantee that matching funds are available and those projects may be passed over in favor of projects with the match in place. Such decisions are based on the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board’s confidence in the applicant’s ability to have the match in place when required.

\(^{13}\) Washington Administrative Code 286-13-040 (3)
When another Recreation and Conservation Funding Board grant is used as match, the “certification of match” will be tentative, conditioned on receipt of the other grant or on the sponsor providing the match from other resources. The applicant will have 6 months from the time of the first grant award to certify the match requirements of that grant. To prevent a backlog of unspent grants, the sponsor must finish the project by the earliest completion date of the two grants.

**Types of Match**

**Donations and Force Account**

Donations are eligible only as matching funds and are not reimbursable. This means RCO will not pay more than the sponsor’s out of pocket expenses. Valuing donations of equipment, labor (including inmates, community service labor, and volunteers), and material is discussed in *Manual 8, Reimbursements*. RCO strongly encourages applicants to secure written confirmation of all donations you plan to use as match and attach the donation letters to your PRISM Online application.

Donated land must expand existing recreation lands or stand on its own as a viable recreation area. Review *Manual 3, Acquisition Projects* before taking title to property that will be donated and used as match. Manual 3 outlines the requirements for valuing the property and for securing a donation statement from the seller.

Force account refers to use of a sponsor’s staff (labor), equipment, or materials. These contributions are treated as expenditures.

**Other Grants**

In some cases, a sponsor may use funds awarded from a separate grant program as its match. Other grants are eligible as long as the purposes are similar and grant sources do not restrict or diminish the use, availability, or value of the project area.

The eligibility of federal funds to be used as a match will be governed by federal requirements and thus will vary with individual program policies.

Applicants must clearly identify in the grant application all grants to be used as match. RCO will help you determine if the source is compatible with Recreation and Conservation Funding Board grants.

**RCO Grants as Match**

Another Recreation and Conservation Funding Board grant or Salmon Recovery Funding Board grant may be used to help meet the match requirements if:
• The grants are not from the same Recreation and Conservation Funding Board grant program,

• Only elements eligible in both grant programs are counted as the match,

• Each grant is evaluated independently and on its own merits, as if the match were coming from elsewhere, and

• Except for federal agencies, state agencies and Native American tribes, at least 10 percent of the total project cost is provided in the form of a non-state, non-federal contribution

For evaluation scoring purpose, an RCO grant used as match will not count toward the award of matching share points.14

**Mitigation Funds as Match**

The Recreation and Conservation Funding Board allows use of impact fees and mitigation cash payments, such as money from a fund established as a mitigation requirement, as match if the money has been passed from the mitigating entity to an eligible applicant, and the board’s grant does not replace mitigation money, repay the mitigation fund, or in any way supplant the obligation of the mitigating entity.

**Grant Limits**

• Minimum grant request = $25,000 for each application

• Maximum grant request = $500,000 for each application

Project cost overruns are the responsibility of the sponsor. Also, the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board will not reimburse more than the sponsor’s actual expenditures.

**Development Projects: Architecture and Engineering**

Architecture and engineering costs for development and renovation projects are limited to 20 percent of the total development project cost. Administrative costs are not eligible.

Additional information about eligibility and reimbursement maximums for these elements is contained in Manual 4, Development Projects (architectural and engineering costs).

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### Additional Federal Requirements

Recipients of federal funds administered by the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board also are subject to the following Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Circulars. Circulars may be viewed online at: [www.whitehouse.gov/omb/circulars/index.html#numerical](http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/circulars/index.html#numerical).

- Any sponsor that receive $500,000 or more from any federal source must have OMB Circular A-133 audit. For state and local agencies, this is generally performed by the State Auditor’s Office.

- Non-profit organizations that receive federal funds, regardless of the amount, are subject to the requirements of OMB Circular A-122, Cost Principles for Non-Profit Organizations.

- State, local, and federally-recognized Indian tribes are subject to the requirements of OMB Circular A-87, Cost Principles for State, Local and Indian Tribal Governments.

- Educational Institutions are subject to the requirements of OMB Circular A-21, Cost Principles for Educational Institutions.

Sponsors may want to review the *Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards; Final Rule*, which was issued December 29, 2013. This streamlined guidance document may be viewed online at: [www.federalregister.gov/articles/2013/12/26/2013-30465/uniform-administrative-requirements-cost-principles-and-audit-requirements-for-federal-awards](http://www.federalregister.gov/articles/2013/12/26/2013-30465/uniform-administrative-requirements-cost-principles-and-audit-requirements-for-federal-awards).

In addition, all recipients of LWCF grants must sign a CD-512 certification form about debarment, suspension, ineligibility, and voluntary exclusion—lower tier covered transactions and lobbying.

### Records and Reimbursement

Applicants must keep detailed records of all funded project costs including force account values and donated contributions. Refer to *Manual 8, Reimbursements* for details and instructions regarding audits, record retention, and documents required for reimbursement.
Section 4: Project Selection

In this section, you’ll learn about:

✓ How Project Evaluation Works
✓ Advisory Committee
✓ Evaluation Criteria

How Project Evaluation Works

Project evaluation is based on a set of questions adopted by the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board. The questions are created from statutory and other criteria developed through a public process. The evaluation questions may be found in the following pages.

There are two sections to the evaluation criteria: Advisory committee or team-scored questions and RCO staff-scored questions. In the first section, advisory committees (see below) use subjective criteria to score each project. Scores are based on each applicant’s response to evaluation questions, graphics presented during the evaluation meeting or included in the application, and summary application material made available in advance of the project’s evaluation.

In the second section, RCO staff scores the projects using objective measures, such as matching share, population, and conformance to growth management planning. Scores are based on material submitted by applicants and information obtained from the state Office of Financial Management and the Department of Commerce.

Scores from sections one and two are combined for a project’s total evaluation score. The resulting ranked lists are the basis for funding recommendations to the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board, which makes the final funding decisions in an open public meeting.
Advisory Committee

RCO manages the LWCF program with the assistance of a standing advisory committee. The LWCF advisory committee’s role is to recommend policies and procedures to RCO for administering grant funds and to review, evaluate, and score grant applications. The resulting ranked list is the basis for funding recommendations to the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board. The Recreation and Conservation Funding Board makes the funding decision in an open public meeting.

In recruiting members for the committee, RCO seeks to appoint people who possess a statewide perspective and are recognized for their experience and knowledge of outdoor recreation, open space, or habitat conservation in Washington.

RCO’s director may appoint ex officio members to the committee to provide additional representation and expertise.

Check RCO’s Web site for membership and other details at www.rco.wa.gov/grants/advisory_cmte.shtml.

Do Not Fund Recommendation

Occasionally during evaluations, the advisory committee may express significant concerns about a project, such that it would like to discuss a “do not fund” recommendation. If this occurs, the advisory committee may discuss its concerns at the post-evaluation meeting, which takes place after application scores are tabulated.

If a “do not fund” recommendation is scheduled to be considered, RCO will notify the applicant in writing, identify the significant concerns expressed by the evaluators, and invite the applicant to attend the post-evaluation meeting to respond to questions. The applicant also may submit a written response to the evaluators’ concerns. To ensure all projects are treated equally, no additional testimony from applicants or visitors is taken at the post-evaluation meeting. The advisory committee determines a “do not fund” recommendation by a simple majority vote of the committee members that participated in application evaluations.

RCO staff will forward to the board a summary of the “do not fund” recommendation and any committee member comments. The board will consider the advisory committee’s recommendation at a regularly scheduled public meeting, before the ranked list is adopted (consideration may take place at the same meeting, but the “do not fund” recommendation will be discussed before the ranked list is adopted). The board and the National Park Service retain discretion in awarding all grant funds.
Evaluation Criteria

The State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) establishes priorities for funding outdoor recreation in Washington State. This evaluation instrument incorporates SCORP priorities identified specifically for the LWCF program that preserves and develops public outdoor recreation lands for the benefit of all citizens. This priority rating system is part of the LWCF open project selection or evaluation process.

### LWCF Evaluation Criteria Summary

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<th>Scored by</th>
<th>#</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Project Type Questions</th>
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**Total Points Possible** 74
Section 4: Project Selection

Evaluation Criteria

Scored by the Advisory Committee

1. **Need.** Considering the availability of existing outdoor recreation facilities within the service area, what is the need for new or improved facilities?

   Describe your service area, the need for the project and how it relates to the service area, with quantifiable data that supports the following:

   - Inventory of existing sites and facilities within the service area
   - Amount of use of existing sites and their condition
   - Populations or user groups in your service area that have unmet needs
   - Changing demographics
   - Whether the project is named by location or type as a priority in an adopted plan such as a community’s comprehensive plan (level of service), a state agency capital improvement plan, a park or open space plan.

   " Point Range: Evaluators award 0-5 points, which are later multiplied by 3.

2. **Need Satisfaction and Diversity of Recreation.** To what extent does this project fill the need described in Question 1 and provide or contribute to the diversity of outdoor recreation assets within the service area?

   Consider the following:

   - What will this site provide, in terms of areas, or facilities that are missing from your inventory of assets?
   - How will this site serve populations that are not served or are underserved?
   - How does this site support activities that are not served or are underserved?
   - How does this project help you provide a range of recreational opportunities for a variety of recreational interests?
   - How does this project meet the need?
Point Range: 0-5. Evaluators award a maximum of 5 points that are later multiplied by 2.

3. **Immediacy of Threat and Viability** (acquisition and combination projects only).

Why purchase this particular property at this time? How viable are the anticipated future uses and benefits of the site?

Consider the following:

**Threat**

- What is the immediate threat or will the property be available for acquisition at a later time?
- What is the significance of the threat? Is it imminent?
- Why was this property selected over other properties considered?
- Is this a high priority outdoor recreation property that will be lost if funding is not made available?
- What proactive steps have you taken to preserve the opportunity for securing this property until funds become available? Why?

**Viability**

- How does existing or planned land use in the surrounding area affect the viability of the site and the proposed outdoor recreation use?
- How many acres will be added to the outdoor recreation inventory? Is this a new site or expansion of an existing area?
- How suitable is the site for the intended use? Describe the attributes: size, topography, soil conditions, natural amenities, location, utility service, wetlands, legal access, etc.
- Will the site be available immediately for public use or will the site require some improvement to make it available for public use? If improvements are necessary, what is the timeframe for implementing future site improvements?
- Who will maintain the site and what resources are necessary and available for maintenance of the site?
4. **Project Design** (development and combination projects only). Is the project well designed?

Consider the following:

- Does this property support the type of development proposed? Describe the attributes: size, topography, soil conditions, natural amenities, location and access, utility service, wetlands, etc.

- How does the project design make the best use of the site?

- How well does the design provide equal access for all people, including those with disabilities? How does this project exceed current barrier-free requirements?

- Does the nature and condition of existing or planned land use in the surrounding area support the type of development proposed?

- How does the design conform to current permitting requirements, building codes, safety standards, best management practices, etc.? What, if any, are the mitigation requirements for this project?

- Does the design align with the described need?

- Are the access routes (paths, walkways, sidewalks) designed appropriately (width, surfacing) for the use and do they provide connectivity to all site elements?

- For trails, does the design provide adequate separation from roadways, surfacing, width, spatial relationships, grades, curves, switchbacks, road crossings, and trailhead locations?

- Is the cost estimate realistic?

▲ Point Range: Evaluators award a maximum of 5 points, which are later multiplied by 2 for development projects.
5. **Sustainability and Environmental Stewardship.** Will the project result in a quality, sustainable, recreational opportunity while protecting the integrity of the environment?

Factors to consider for acquisition and/or development projects are outlined in this table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acquisition</th>
<th>Development</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Does the acquisition and proposed development preserve the natural function of the site?</td>
<td>• Does the proposed development protect natural resources onsite and integrate sustainable elements such as low impact development techniques, green infrastructure, or environmentally preferred building products?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• How do the proposed uses protect, enhance or restore the ecosystem functions of the property?</td>
<td>• Vegetation/Surfaces – Are you replacing invasive plant species with native vegetation? Are you using pervious surfaces for any of the proposed facilities?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Are there invasive species on site? If there are, what is your response plan?</td>
<td>• What is the strategy or plan for maintenance and stewardship of the site?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What is the strategy or plan for maintenance and stewardship of the site?</td>
<td>• Education – Are you installing interpretive panels/signs that educate users about sustainability?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• How do the natural characteristics of the site support future planned uses?</td>
<td>• Materials – What sustainable materials are included in the project?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• To provide for greater fuel economy, is the proposed acquisition located close to the intended users?</td>
<td>• Energy – What energy efficient features are you adding?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What modes of transportation provide access to the site?</td>
<td>• What modes of transportation provide access to the site?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Does this project protect wetlands or wetland functions? Describe the size, quality and classification.</td>
<td>• Water – Is the on-site storm water managed by rain gardens, porous paving, or other sustainable features? Does the design exceed permit requirements for storm water management?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• How does the proposed acquisition help create connectivity? How many acres are already protected? How critical is this property to the overall plan?</td>
<td>• If there are wetlands on site, describe the size, quality and classification and explain how the design considers the wetland functions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What other noteworthy characteristics demonstrate how the natural features of the site contribute to energy efficiency, less maintenance, fewer environmental impacts, or</td>
<td>• What is the strategy or plan for maintenance and stewardship of the site?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6. **Federal grant program goals.** How well does the proposed project meet Department of the Interior and National Park Service goals for grant programs?

The National Park Service is a bureau within the Department of Interior. Both the National Park Service and the Department of Interior develop annual goals for their programs. Applicants and evaluators will be provided with the most recent set of federal goals. Evaluators will be asked to determine the extent to which a proposed project addresses those goals.

For example: if the National Park Service has goals to encourage projects that meet the needs of underserved communities, expand the public recreation estate, or strengthen the health and vitality of the American people, applicants should demonstrate how their projects address these goals locally, regionally, or statewide.

Projects providing opportunities that help meet one or more federal goals should receive higher scores than those projects that do not help meet any of the goals.

▲ Point Range: Evaluators award 0-5 points, which are later multiplied by 2.

7. **Readiness.** Is the proposed project ready to proceed?

National Park Service rules and board policy give preference to proposals where the applicant is ready to start work as soon as a project agreement is signed.

Consider the following:

- Is there a project implementation plan in place?
- What is the proposed timeline for acquisition and/or development?
- Is there known opposition that might delay implementation of the project?
Development projects

- Is the design in the conceptual phase or has a master plan been developed?
- Has the master plan been adopted by the governing body?
- What percentage of the design is completed to date?
- What permits are in hand for this project? What permits or clearances are still needed?
- Are the bid documents ready?

Acquisition projects

- Was the property purchased under a waiver of retroactivity?
- Is there an option or a first-right of refusal to purchase the property?
- Are required appraisals and reviews completed?
- Is there a willing seller?
- How far along are you in securing the property?

▲ Point Range: Evaluators award 0-5 points.

8. **Community support.** To what extent has the community been provided with an adequate opportunity to become informed about the project and provide input? What is the level of community support for the project?

Examples of community involvement may include public meetings, articles in local papers, newsletters, media coverage, and involvement in a local planning process that includes the specific project.

Examples of community support may include voter approved initiatives, bond issues, or referenda; endorsements or other support from advisory boards and user or “friends” groups; letters of support or petitions; or editorials.

▲ Evaluators score 0-5 points for all projects.

9. **Cost efficiencies.** To what extent does this project demonstrate efficiencies or a reduction in government costs through documented use of donations or other resources?

Donations – cash, real property, volunteer labor, equipment use, or materials
Section 4: Project Selection

- What are the donations for this project?
- Who is making the donation?
- What is the value of the donation and how was the value determined?
- Is the donation in hand?
- If the donation is not in hand, do you have a letter of commitment from the donor that specifies what is being donated and when?
- Is the donation necessary for implementation of the project? Are donations included in the project proposal?

Private grants awarded by non-governmental organizations

- Is there a private grant that is being used as match for this project?
- Who awarded the grant?
- What is the grant amount?
- What is the purpose of the grant?
- When will grant funds be available?

Are there other efficiencies for this project that will result in cost savings?

- What is the cost efficiency?
- Who is providing it?
- What’s the value?
- When was the commitment made and when does it expire?

▲ Point Range: Evaluators award 0-5 points.

Evaluators may add 1 point to the score assigned above, if an applicant demonstrates cost savings through governmental efficiencies. Matching grants from governmental entities are not eligible for consideration under this factor.
Scoring by RCO Staff – Applicants Do Not Answer

10. Population Proximity. Is the project in a populated area?

This question is scored based on a map provided by the applicant. To receive a score, the map must show the project location and project boundary in relationship to a city’s or town’s urban growth boundary.

▲ Point Range: RCO staff awards a maximum of 3 points.

A. The project is in the urban growth area boundary of a city or town with a population of 5,000 or more.
   Yes: 1.5 points
   No: 0 points

AND

B. The project is in a county with a population density of 250 or more people per square mile.
   Yes: 1.5 points
   No: 0 points

The result from “A” is added to the result from “B.” Projects in cities with more than 5,000 population and within high density counties receive points from both “A” and “B.”

11. Applicant compliance. Is the sponsor in compliance with its RCO grant agreements?

When scoring this question, staff will consider the applicant’s record in all RCO-managed grant programs.

▲ Point Range: -2 to 0

0 points Sponsor has no known compliance issues and no unapproved conversions.

-1 point Sponsor has one or more known compliance issues including at least one unapproved conversion, but actively is working to correct the issues.

-2 points Sponsor has one or more known compliance issues including at least one unapproved conversion, but is not working actively to correct the issues; or the sponsor has been identified as a high-risk sponsor.
Section 5: Post-Completion Requirements

In this section, you’ll learn about:

✓ An Ongoing Commitment
✓ Changing the use of property
✓ Obsolete facilities

An Ongoing Commitment

No matter the funding level or relative share of LWCF funds in a given project, LWCF rules and processes will apply to the entire funded project in perpetuity.

Post-Completion Responsibilities and Inspections

RCO staff, in cooperation with the National Park Service, will inspect all projects 5 years after final payment is made and then at 5-year intervals afterward. The inspections ensure that:

• The property acquired and developed with LWCF grants is being operated and maintained so as to appear attractive and inviting to the public.

• Sanitation and sanitary facilities are being maintained in accordance with applicable health standards.

• Properties are being kept reasonably safe for public use.

• Buildings, roads, trails, and other structures and improvements are being kept in reasonable repair throughout their estimated lifetime to prevent undue deterioration and to encourage public use.
• The facilities are open for public use at reasonable hours and times of the year, according to the type of area or facility.

On-site, post-completion inspections include the following points:

• **Retention and Use.** Is the property being used for the purposes intended?

• **Appearance.** Is the property attractive and inviting to the public?

• **Maintenance.** Is upkeep and repair of structures and improvements adequate? Is there evidence of poor workmanship or use of inferior quality materials or construction? Is vandalism a problem?

• **Management.** Does staffing and servicing of facilities appear adequate?

• **Availability.** Is there evidence of discrimination? Is the property readily accessible and open to the public during reasonable hours and times of the year?

• **Environment.** Is the quality of the area being maintained?

• **Signing.** Is the area properly signed to allow for user information and safety, and proper acknowledgement of the LWCF assistance received?

• **Interim Use.** Where lands have been acquired but not yet developed, the inspection should determine whether the interim use being made of the property, if any, is as agreed to by the National Park Service.

• **Accessibility.** Is the area or facility accessible by people with disabilities? Have lips, grades, and slopes that prevent use by all people been eliminated?

• **Conversion.** Is any part of the property being used for ineligible activities? Has any encroachment occurred (such as neighboring landowners, street right-of-ways, utilities, etc.)?

Under Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, property acquired or developed with LWCF grants shall be open to entry and use by all people regardless of race, color, or national origin. Section 6(f)(8) of the LWCF Act and 36 CFR 59.4 provide that with respect to property acquired or developed with LWCF grants, discrimination on the basis of residence, including preferential reservation, membership, and annual permit systems, is prohibited except to the extent that differences in admission and other fees may be maintained on the basis of residence.

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 requires that no qualified person shall, on the basis of handicap, be excluded from participation in, be denied benefits of, or otherwise be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity that receives benefits from federal financial assistance.
Project sponsors may impose reasonable limits on the type and extent of use of areas and facilities acquired or developed with LWCF grants when such a limitation is necessary for maintenance or preservation. Thus limitations may be imposed on the numbers of people using an area or facility or the type of users, such as "hunters only" or "hikers only." All limitations shall be in accord with the application agreements and amendments.

**Non-Recreation Uses**

Non-recreation uses, such as timber management, grazing, and other natural resource uses, not including agriculture, may be allowed on the land if they are:

- Clearly described in the project application.
- Compatible with and secondary to outdoor recreation use.
- Approved by the National Park Service and RCO director.

Non-recreation uses such as agriculture occurring on the property at the time of acquisition may continue for up to three years, contingent on approval by the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board and National Park Service. A project sponsor will not receive reimbursement on the project until the non-recreation use is terminated.

**Changing the Use of Property**

The LWCF Act requires that all property acquired or developed with LWCF funds be dedicated in perpetuity exclusively to public outdoor recreation use. The law further states that no property can be converted to a different use without the approval of the Secretary of the Interior.

This law affects land within the "project boundary" as shown on maps submitted with the grant application, and normally is the boundary of the park that is to be acquired or developed. The project boundary cannot be less than the area acquired with LWCF grants but sometimes is less than the entire park on development projects. If land or facilities are excluded, the project sponsor must state the reason for the exclusion on the map submitted with the grant application. Typical reasons to exclude an area would include an existing or proposed community center within the park, or lease of land to a nonprofit organization (such as the Boy Scouts) in a large wilderness-type park. Exclusions require approval from the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board and the National Park Service.

When an organization wants to convert land to another use, it must replace the land with other land that is in accord with the statewide comprehensive outdoor recreation plan,
of at least current fair market value, and of reasonable equivalent usefulness and location.

Conversions generally occur when:

- Property interests are conveyed for non-public outdoor recreation uses. Property interests are conveyed to a third party not otherwise eligible for the program that funded the project.
- Non-recreation uses (public or private) are made of the project area or a portion of it.
- Non-eligible, indoor recreation facilities are developed on the land without State or National Park Service approval.
- Public outdoor recreation use is terminated.

Exceptions

- Underground utility easements that do not have significant impacts on the current or future recreational utility of the park will not constitute a conversion.
- Proposals to construct public facilities or to shelter or enclose outdoor recreation facilities, where it can be shown to increase the public recreational opportunity, may not constitute a conversion. The National Park Service will give approval on a case-by-case basis.

Public Structures

The National Park Service will consider requests to construct sponsor-funded public facilities only if the following prerequisites and criteria have been met.

- All requests must be made in writing and in advance of construction of the public facility.
- All design and location alternatives have been adequately considered, documented, and rejected on a sound basis.
- The State has adequately reviewed the project and the RCO director has recommended it.
- Use of the facility will be compatible with outdoor recreation and will increase outdoor recreation use; and recreation use remains the overall primary function of the site.
The proposed structure is compatible and significantly supportive of the outdoor recreation resources of the site, whether existing or planned. The park’s outdoor recreation use must continue to be greater than that expected for any indoor uses, unless the site is a single-use facility that virtually occupies the entire site. Examples of uses which would not be approved ordinarily include, but are not limited to: a community recreation center, which takes up all or most of a small park site; police stations; fire stations; professional sports facilities; or commercial resort or other facilities which:

- Are not accessible to the general public.
- Require memberships.
- Due to high user fees, have the effect of excluding elements of the public.
- Which include office, residential, or elaborate lodging facilities.

Potential and future benefits to the total park’s outdoor recreation use must be identified in the proposal. Any costs or detriments should be documented and a net recreation benefit must result.

The proposed facility must be under the control and tenure of the public agency that sponsors and administers the original park area.

The proposal has been subjected to public review. Public comment providing evidence of public support must accompany the proposal.

All applicable federal requirements for approval and operation are met.

**Obsolete Facilities**

Project sponsors are not required to continue operation of a recreation area or facility beyond its useful life. However, the LWCF Act, Section 6(f)(3), requires that project sponsors maintain the entire area defined in the project agreement in some form of public outdoor recreation use. Sponsors should obtain approval from RCO and the National Park Service before altering the original plans for the area.

Not all changes require National Park Service approval. For example, changing from a tennis court to a basketball court may not require federal review. Project sponsors must notify RCO in advance of all project changes. RCO and the National Park Service will make a determination of whether a formal review and approval process will be required.
Determination that a Facility is Obsolete\textsuperscript{15}

Notwithstanding neglect or inadequate maintenance by the project sponsor, a recreation area or facility may be determined to be obsolete if:

- Reasonable maintenance and repairs are not sufficient to keep the recreation area or facility operating.
- Changing recreation needs dictate a change in the type of facilities provided.
- Park operating practices dictate a change in the type of facilities required.
- The recreation area or facility is destroyed by fire, natural disaster, or vandalism.

A project sponsor may permit the use of a facility to be discontinued or allow a particular type of recreation use of the area to be changed after submitting acceptable justification to RCO. If RCO determines the facility is needed and was lost through neglect or inadequate maintenance, the change would be deemed a conversion and replacement facilities must be provided at the current value of the original investment.

\textsuperscript{15} Federal LWCF Manual 675.9.4(B.)
Appendix A: Other Federal Acts and Laws

The Land and Water Conservation Fund is a single-purpose grant program for acquisition and development of land for public outdoor recreation facilities. When federal funds are used, applicants must comply with all applicable federal laws. A statement on the effect of the project on the relevant subjects in Table 1 below must be included in the environmental assessment.

Projects awarded LWCF grants are subject to the provisions of the LWCF Grants Manual (U.S. Department of Interior, National Park Service). The following summarizes many of these requirements that may apply:

**Construction contracts over $10,000** must:

- Award such contracts through competitive bidding. Copies of all advertisements, bids, and contracts must be sent to RCO.
- Include the following statement in all press releases, requests for proposals, bid solicitations, agreements, and other documents describing the project:
  
  “This project is assisted by a $[insert dollar amount] federal grant, which is [insert percentage] percent of its total construction cost.”
- Include a statement in compliance with the Copeland Anti-Kickback Act.
- Include the approved anti-discrimination statement.

**Affirmative Action.** Some projects are affected by federal Hometown Plan Affirmative Action requirements regarding construction contractors. RCO will notify the sponsors of such projects.
Projects over $500,000. Such projects must display temporary acknowledgment signs. RCO will provide sign specifications. The signs must be in place from the time of closing for acquisition projects and from the start of construction through completion in development projects.

Army Corps of Engineer Permits. A copy of any required Army Corps of Engineers permit must be provided to RCO before execution of the project agreement.

Sponsors are responsible for compliance with the following Public Laws (P.L.), Executive Orders (E.O.), Codes (C.F.R. and U.S.C.), and Budget Circulars.

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<td>Civil Rights Act of 1964</td>
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<td>Clean Water Act</td>
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<td>Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972</td>
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<td>Contract Work Hours and Safety Standards Act and Implementing Regulations.</td>
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<tr>
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<th>Reference</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rivers and Harbor Act of 1899</td>
<td>(33 U.S.C., sec. 401 et. seq.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wetlands, Protection of</td>
<td>(E.O. 11990)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Water Pollution, Prevention, Control and Abatement of</td>
<td>(E.O. 11288)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Appendix B: Suggested Review Agencies

Below are suggested review agencies to consult when preparing an environmental assessment.

- Concerned tribes
- Council of Governments
- Environmental Protection Agency
- Federal Aviation Administration
- Interested city and county councils, departments, boards, etc.
- Minerals Management Service
- National Marine Fisheries Service
- National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
- Office of Energy
- Public health department
- Public interest groups
- Salmon Recovery Funding Board
- School districts
- State historic preservation officer
- State water resources agency
- U.S. and Washington Department of Energy
- U.S. and Washington Department of Transportation
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs
- U.S. Bureau of Reclamation
- U.S.D.A. Agriculture and Forestry Experimental Station
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- U.S. Geological Survey
- U.S. Soil Conservation Service
- Washington Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Division
- Washington Department of Ecology
- Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife
- Washington Department of Natural Resources