

Florida Department of Environmental Protection
Instructions for Completing
Land and Water Conservation Fund Program
Grant Application Process (DRP-121)

FACTS ABOUT LWCF

What is the Land and Water Conservation Fund Program?

The Land and Water Conservation Fund Program (LWCF) is a competitive program that provides grants for acquiring or developing land for public outdoor recreational use. LWCF is a reimbursement grant program.

How is LWCF Administered?

The program is administered by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), Office of Operations on behalf of the U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service (NPS). The Program is governed according to Florida Statutes, Administrative Code and the LWCF Grants Manual. **In accordance with the LWCF Act, available program funds are contingent upon an annual appropriation to each state by Congress.**

Who May Apply for LWCF Funds?

All local governmental entities with the legal responsibility for the provision of outdoor recreational sites and facilities for the use and benefit of the public.

How Do I Apply?

Applicants must submit a completed LWCF grant application during an announced submission period. Applicants may submit only one application during the submission period. Applications must involve only one project site except for acquisition or development of sandy beach access.

What is the Maximum Grant Amount?

The maximum grant amount is \$200,000.00.

What is the LWCF Matching Ratio?

The matching ratio is one applicant dollar to one federal dollar for all LWCF grant awards (50% / 50%).

What Can I Use to Match a LWCF Grant?

*Cash; *In-kind services; *Value of donated real property owned by applicant (must be pre-approved by DEP).

What may LWCF Funds be used for?

Development: Outdoor recreation areas and facilities such as beaches, picnic areas, trails, ball fields, tennis and basketball courts and playgrounds along with associated support facilities such as lighting, parking, restrooms and landscaping. Enclosed buildings and structures (except restrooms, restroom/concession buildings and bathhouses) are ineligible.

Acquisition: Land for outdoor recreation purposes.

Must an applicant own the project site?

For development projects, the applicant must own the project site or lease it from a public agency by the closing date of the application submission period. Land owned or leased by the applicant must be dedicated in perpetuity as a public outdoor recreation area.

How are LWCF Grants Awarded?

Each application is reviewed to determine eligibility. Staff evaluates each eligible application according to the Florida Administrative Code and the LWCF Manual, and assigns a final score. Based on the scores, the Bureau prepares and submits a recommended priority list to the Secretary of the DEP for approval. State approved projects are then submitted to the U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service for final review and award.

If an applicant is awarded LWCF funds, what are the major requirements?

Project Agreement: DEP and the grantee will enter into an agreement setting forth conditions consistent with DEP policy, the Florida Administrative Code and the LWCF Manual.

Completion Time: Grantees may be allowed up to three years from the effective date of the agreement to complete development projects, and one year for acquisition projects.

Payment Schedule: Grantees will receive LWCF funds on a reimbursement basis.

Project Plans: Development projects shall have final plans prepared and certified by an engineer or architect registered in the State of Florida.

Project Accessibility: A recipient of federal funding may not, directly or through contractual or other arrangements, on the grounds of age, race, color, sex, national origin, physical or mental disability, deny an individual any service or benefit which could otherwise be reasonably provided.

Restrictions: LWCF assisted sites must be dedicated in perpetuity and cannot be converted for any purpose other than outdoor recreational use. No exceptions (see the conversion clause of the LWCF for details).

Site Dedication: LWCF assisted park land must be dedicated as a public outdoor recreation area **in perpetuity**. Grantees must commit to operate and maintain LWCF assisted public recreation facilities in reasonable repair for a minimum of 25 years after completion of construction to prevent undue deterioration.

Land Acquisition: Unless approved by DEP in advance, formal negotiations for acquisition of a LWCF assisted site may not begin until the grant is awarded by the National Park Service. Grantees have up to three years to develop the property after purchase.

GENERAL APPLICATION INFORMATION

- Applicants must complete the LWCF Proposal Description and Environmental Screening Form
- Applicants receiving LWCF funds will be required to have a LWCF Grants-in-Aid Manual. This will be provided by DEP on a CD-ROM. This manual also may be downloaded from our website: www.dep.state.fl.us/parks/oirs
- Applicants must submit THREE copies (1 original and 2 copies) of the completed application and all supporting documents during the announced submission. The application must be submitted in a SOFT COVER binder (please, **no 3-ring binders**). To facilitate the review and scoring process, tab all support documents or attachments according to Part III of this application.
- Applications must contain the information as outlined on the supporting documentation checklist.
- ANY APPLICATIONS SUBMITTED WITHOUT EXHIBITS BEING TABBED, WILL BE SENT BACK TO THE APPLICANT AS DEFICIENT AND ASKED TO BE TABBED.
- **The Applications** must be postmarked **NO LATER THAN** _____ and submitted:

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION
OFFICE OF OPERATIONS
LAND AND RECREATION GRANTS SECTION
3900 COMMONWEALTH BOULEVARD, MAIL STATION 585
TALLAHASSEE, FLORIDA 32399-3000

APPLICATION PROCESS

- Applications are reviewed by DEP for eligibility and completeness in accordance with the program Rule and the LWCF Manual
- 15 day deficiency notification submittal for corrections
- Applications are scored and ranked in priority
- Recommended application list is reviewed and approved by the DEP Secretary
- DEP submits the projects to State Clearinghouse for approval
- DEP submits the projects along with the Screening Form to NPS for review and approval.
- NPS must approve projects prior to State/Local agreements are approved
- Upon NPS approval State/Local agreements are developed in accordance with the application information.

EVALUATION PROCESS

Grant applications are evaluated according to policies and procedures described in Chapter 62D-5, Part VII, Florida Administrative Code (F.A.C.). This is commonly known as the LWCF Rule. All applicants should be familiar with these policies and procedures. This packet is designed to assist all applicants in presenting the necessary information needed for DEP to evaluate proposed grant applications. Applicants must submit proposals for LWCF grants on application form DRP-121. Failure by an applicant to present all required application information and documentation may result in the application not receiving points or being declared ineligible for funding consideration. Following DEP staff review of the applications, DEP will notify applicants of any deficiencies. Missing or incomplete documentation will usually constitute a deficiency. Applicants must submit requested deficiency information within **fifteen (15) working days from the date of deficiency notification**. After the deficiency period, DEP ranks all eligible applications in accordance with the evaluation criteria set forth in the LWCF Rule.

Acquisition Projects

A request for financial assistance must be for acquisition or development of land for public outdoor recreational purposes. An acquisition project approved for funding must be acquired within one (1) year of the effective date of the project agreement and must be developed for public use within three (3) years of completion of the acquisition. An approved acquisition project will require a self-contained narrative, appraisal(s), title search, and if applicable a mean or ordinary high water survey prior to project commencement. The appraisal(s) will be reviewed by a fee appraiser under contract with DEP's Division of State Lands. The appraisal must conform to the *Uniform Appraisal Standards for Federal Land Acquisition* (UASFLA). The standards may be found at: <http://www.usdoj.gov/enrd/land-ack>. Payment of appraisal review fees will be the responsibility of the grantee and will be made by the grantee immediately upon and pursuant to the direction of the Office of Financial Management. These expenses are not eligible for reimbursement under the LWCF program. If the proposed project is approved at state level, and the property must be acquired prior to NPS approval, a waiver of retroactivity must be obtained from the DEP to ensure eligibility of the project. Granting a waiver does not imply funding will be approved.

Development Projects

A development proposal should consist of the complete or partial development of the project site. The grantee shall have up to three (3) years from effective date of the project agreement to complete the project. A development project, when completed, must be a useable recreation area. A development application may consist of one improvement or a group of related improvements designed to provide primary facilities for outdoor recreation. Secondary or support facilities and improvements for access, safety and protection of the project visitors are viable project components but should not dominate the proposed project. Primary facility costs must be equal to or greater than fifty percent of the total project cost. Support facilities alone do not constitute an eligible project, except projects which provide or improve beach access. Eligible facilities are described in the LWCF Rule.

APPLICATION CHECKLIST:

Before you finish your application package, make sure you have all necessary support documents prepared. Use this list to make sure that all applicable and all required documentation is included. Attach supporting documents as follows: **To facilitate review and scoring, tab all supporting documents at the end of the application. Attach supporting documents as follows:**

Application Item - If Applicable	Development Projects	Acquisition Projects	Tab as Exhibit
<p>NOTE: Three (3) copies of the completed and signed application and all supporting documents must be submitted before _____ (1 original and 2 copies).</p>			Use a soft covered binder.
<p>A. Capital improvements schedule or a copy of a resolution amending the existing schedule to include the proposed project. Designate proposed project. Include a letter from the City or County Manager certifying the five-year capital improvement schedule is officially adopted.</p>			A
<p>B. SCORP objectives support documentation Written response to Part II, Item 2A on page 9 of this application. Include narrative explaining how the project implements one or more of the outdoor recreation goals and objectives as listed in the CURRENT SCORP – Chapter 5. Provide quotations or other appropriate references with explanations to justify the correlation.</p> <p>Link to SCORP Website: http://www.dep.state.fl.us/parks/outdoor/scorp.htm</p>			B
<p>C. Public participation documentation:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Copy of public meeting advertisement for SOLE PURPOSE of discussing the project. ----- 2. Agenda and minutes of REGULARLY SCHEDULED advisory board meeting. ----- 3. Documentation of presentation to community groups (minutes or letter of thanks, from organization, association etc.) OR A copy of the survey instrument and a summary of the results as they relate to the proposed project. (Support letters are not acceptable for points). 			C1 C2 C3

Application Item - Required	Development Project	Acquisition Project	Tab as Exhibit
D. Documentation to support preservation purposes. Provide a copy of the Department of State letter.			D
E. Documentation of ability to support Programming and maintenance of project site. Provide a copy of an agency organizational chart and an explanation of ability to provide development, programming and maintenance			E
F. Documentation to support resource protection. Attach a letter from the Florida Natural Areas Inventory including supporting inventory Information.			F
G. Excerpts of the Recreation/Open Space element of the local comprehensive plan identifying needed acreage. Provide excerpt which indicates needed number of acres and provide how much acreage local government already has control of.			G
<p>H. 1. Conceptual site plan for development of the project area: Submit a conceptual site plan displaying the areas and facilities to be developed as proposed in the scope of the application. The site plan must correlate with the project area identified in the project boundary map and cost estimate. The site plan must CLEARLY DELINEATE between facilities/ opportunities currently existing, facilities proposed for funding in this application and facilities planned for future development. Color code your site plan to indicate facilities that are existing, proposed for funding and planned for future development (not in this project).</p> <p>-----</p> <p>1. If acquisition project, along with site plan for the development, submit a timeline for the development of the acquisition project.</p>			H

Application Item - Required	Development Project	Acquisition Project	Tab as Exhibit
<p>I. Section 6f Boundary map of the project area: Submit a boundary map of the project area. The map must provide a <u>legal description and sketch of the project area boundaries, display known easements and be legally sufficient to identify the project area.</u> Also, depict where and how the public will access the site, parking, etc. Plat maps may be accepted if the above criteria are identified. Map may be no larger than <u>11x17.</u></p>			I
<p>J. Color photographs of the project area: Submit color, on-site photographs sufficient to depict the physical characteristics of the project area. Provide color photographs for all three copies of your application. Aerial photographs are requested, but not required. Mark an approximate boundary of the project site and note major roads and/or landmarks on the aerial photo (note --this is not the boundary map).</p>			J
<p>K. Location map and directions: Submit a detailed street, road or highway map precisely locating the project site. (Map Quest is not acceptable.) Also, provide clear and concise written driving instructions from the nearest federal or state highway. NOTE: Confirm that street names listed in the written directions are the same as those posted on street signs in the area.</p>			K
<p>L. Site Control (e.g. , deed, lease): Submit a copy of the site control document for the project site. If submerged lands are included in the development area, provide a legal document (i.e., permit, management agreement, etc.) which indicates permission to use and develop the submerged lands. State owned property must include a letter from Department of Environmental Protection's Division of State Lands Approving application of grant funding and development. <u>Site control must be effective by the close of the submission period.</u></p>			L

Application Item - Required	Development Project	Acquisition Project	Tab as Exhibit
<p>M. 1) Provide a project narrative of the proposed project which includes existing and future uses, existing and proposed physical improvements, natural and historical resources, any proposed resource protection/conservation and any existing buildings on site. Must be at least three (3) paragraphs.</p> <p>-----</p> <p>2) Provide an estimated value (ex. Tax assessed value) of property being acquired.</p>			M
<p>N. PD/ESF Forms Provide the current forms retrieved and completed from the National Park Service Federal Website: http://www.nps.gov/ncrc/programs/lwcf/pub.htm.</p> <p>See instruction details listed on Page 26 of the LWCF Grant Application Packet.</p>			N