



FORESTS, PARKS & RECREATION  
**VERMONT**



AGENCY OF NATURAL RESOURCES

# 2025 LAND AND WATER CONSERVATION FUND GRANT WEBINAR

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WELCOME





Little River State Park, Waterbury

# TODAY'S AGENDA

- About the LWCF Program
- Timeline and Process
- Eligibility
- Compliance Requirements
- Pre-Application Tips and Tricks
- Additional Resources
- Q&A



## ABOUT THE LWCF PROGRAM

- Funded by the U.S. Department of the Interior National Park Service (NPS)
- Established in 1964. Fully and permanently funded by the Great American Outdoors Act in 2020.
- Approximately \$3.3M to award in 2025
- Recommended LWCF requests: \$25,000 to \$1,000,000

# LWCF FUNDING GOALS



- Safeguard natural areas, water resources and cultural heritage.
- Provide recreation opportunities to all Vermonters.
- Advance the vision and priorities of the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP).



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# LWCF PROJECTS SUPPORT VERMONT'S SCORP



## Equity

*We will collectively expand opportunities and reduce barriers so that all people feel welcome in Vermont's outdoors.*

## Climate Resilience

*We will collectively strengthen the sustainability, flexibility, and resilience of our communities so that we can weather the impacts of climate change.*

## Stewardship

**PROTECT ● MAINTAIN ● CONSERVE**

*We will ensure that we protect the health of our environment and cultivate and preserve high quality outdoor recreation experiences.*

## Wellness

**LEARN ● CREATE ● CONNECT**

*We will create and steward places and connections that welcome all people and allow them to heal, learn, grow, and live their lives fully.*

## Economic Development

**CULTIVATE ● INVEST ● BUILD**

*We will support communities to be proactive in using outdoor recreation to create a sustainable, vibrant, future.*



# TIMELINE + PROCESS





# APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY



Municipal Entities  
(Towns, Cities,  
School Districts,  
Water Districts,  
Park Districts)



State Government Agencies,  
Other Governmental  
Entities (e.g. Regional  
Entity), or  
Tribal Governments



# Important Things to Know

- LWCF is a reimbursement program.
- Minimum 50% match required.
- Recreational spaces acquired or developed using LWCF assistance must be maintained and remain open for public outdoor recreation *in perpetuity*.



*Williston,  
2018 LWCF*



## PROJECT ELIGIBILITY

- Acquisition of land for parks and public outdoor recreation
- Development of new outdoor recreation facilities
  - Renovation of existing facilities for outdoor recreation
- Combination of the above



*Island Pond,  
2024 LWCF*





# ACQUISITION AND DEVELOPMENT

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# ACQUISITION PROJECTS

Purchasing of land to create a new park or expand an existing park

## Example Eligible Projects

- Community Parks
- Public purchases of previously private recreation facilities
- Linear parks
- Natural and scenic areas
- Water-oriented recreation sites

## Example Ineligible Projects

- Historic sites, museums
- Professional/semi-professional facilities
- Conservation land with no public access
- Indoor recreation facilities
- Lodges, motels, restaurants
- Agricultural land



# ACQUISITION COSTS

## Example Eligible Costs

- Purchase costs of real property costs
- Cost of easements

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## Example Ineligible Costs

- Incidental purchase costs: appraisal fees, legal fees, surveying, etc.
- Fines and penalties



*Wheeler Mountain, 2024 LWCF*



# ACQUISITIONS: KEY INFORMATION



*Burlington, 2017 LWCF*

- **Do not acquire any land until federal approval has been obtained.**
  - Exceptions may be made only when absolutely necessary, and only if the applicant stands to lose an opportunity to acquire a significant piece of property if action to secure property is not taken immediately.
  - Requires a Waiver of Retroactivity from NPS
- Yellow book/UASFLA appraisal required
- All acquired lands need to be open/developed for recreation within 3 years of purchase.





# DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

Construction or rehabilitation of outdoor recreation facilities

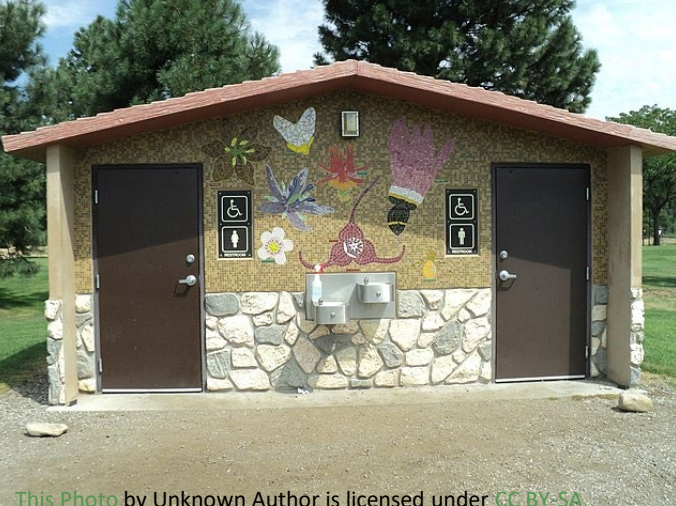
## Example Eligible Projects

- Sports and playfields
- Playgrounds
- Camping facilities
- Picnic facilities
- Boating facilities
- Swimming areas
- Boating Facilities
- Fishing/hunting facilities
- Winter sports facilities
- Community gardens
- Recreation support facilities, such as restroom buildings, roads, parking, landscaping, and walkways

## Example Ineligible Projects

- Indoor facilities (except swimming pools and ice-skating rinks)
- Community centers
- Historic buildings
- Park manager's residences
- Meeting rooms
- Auditoriums
- Maintenance equipment or routine maintenance projects
- Roads outside of the 6(f) area
- Commercial-type amusement centers
- Professional or semi-professional sporting complexes





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# DEVELOPMENT COSTS

## Example Eligible Costs

- Construction costs: labor, materials, equipment, supplies, engineering, inspections
- Permanently installed recreation equipment
- Informational and directional signs
- Pre-award planning costs within 3 years only (no pre-award construction!)

## Example Ineligible Costs

- Ceremonial or entertainment expenses
- Expenses for publicity
- Bonus payment of any kind
- Charges for contingency reserves or other similar reserves
- Interest expenses
- Operation and maintenance costs of outdoor recreation areas and facilities, including maintenance equipment
- Employee facilities including residences, appliances, office equipment, furniture, and utensils
- Fines and Penalties
- Lobbying or fundraising expenses
- Charges that didn't go through the appropriate procurement procedures
- Cost overruns



# DEVELOPMENT: KEY INFORMATION

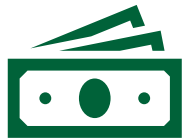


- Projects can only occur on lands that are:
  - Owned in full
  - Leased from the federal government with at least 25 years remaining
  - Owned in part with restrictions that maintain outdoor recreation access in perpetuity (e.g. conservation easements)
- Projects on school grounds are eligible – if the facility will be open to the public
  - Need to meet national safety standards for playgrounds
- Projects should be “shovel-ready”
- Facilities must be accessible for people with disabilities.





# LWCF COMPLIANCE REQUIREMENTS



## Fiscal

Certificate of Good Standing, Risk Assessment, Insurance, W-9, Procurement



## Environmental

National Environmental Protection Act, State Permits, Northern Long-Eared Bat Impacts



## Historical Preservation

Section 106

# TO SUBMIT A PRE-APPLICATION

**Before 11:59 pm on December 13, 2024**, email the following documents:

- 2025 LWCF Pre-Application Form
- 2025 LWCF Workplan
- 2025 LWCF Budget
- Climate Resilience Risk Form
- Completed Permit Navigator/Project Review Sheet results

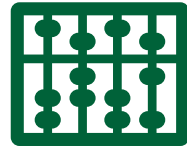


# PRE-APPLICATION REVIEW CRITERIA



## Eligibility

Do the applicant and project meet the requirements?



## Feasibility

Is the project permissible? Does the outdoor recreation benefit outweigh any potential environmental impacts?



## Readiness

Are the submitted materials (workplan, budget, forms) complete? Does the project design appropriately address site-specific climate risks?



## Compliance

Does it meet federal LWCF requirements?





# PRE-APPLICATION TIPS AND TRICKS

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# CLIMATE RESILIENCE RISK FORM

- Purpose:
  - Provide FPR staff and the grant ranking committee the information needed to assess the resilience of the project.
  - Help guide the grant applicant to develop more resilient projects.
- For the Pre-Application:
  - Assessing readiness
  - Flagging areas where further information may be needed in the full application



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## CLIMATE RESILIENCE RISK FORM: IMPORTANT NOTE

Just because a project has higher potential climate resilience risks does not necessarily mean it won't be selected.

It just means your design and stewardship plan should clearly account for these risks!



# BUDGET

- Be thorough, detailed, and accurate. Your budget should be your best estimate of the costs for the project.
- 50% Match Required
  - Can be cash or in-kind match
  - ONLY allowed federal match: RTP or Community Development Block Grant



*Winooski,  
2019 LWCF*

# WORKING WITH CONTRACTORS

Reach out for estimates for accurate budget planning.

- Best practice: three estimates- but if you can't get this, OK to base your budgeting on *current* active projects, recommendations from professional organizations, etc.

**Do NOT sign a contract until AFTER you have a signed grant**

See FPR's [Procurement Guidance for Grantees](#).



# PERMITTING



You will need to submit a PDF of the Permit Navigator Results or Project Review Sheet for your project.

- Even if you own the land or are working in an existing footprint, this is **REQUIRED**.
- Detailed directions are available in the Pre-Application Guidance document.

# PERMITTING TOOLS



## Permit Navigator

- For projects that take place at one site or location
- Online tool that can be completed at any time.
- Answer as many questions as possible!

## Project Review Sheet

- For linear projects or large projects that span multiple parcels.
- Form submitted to DEC staff for expert review.
- Start this at least one month before the deadline!



# PERMITTING PROCESS

Were potential permits identified in your Permit Navigator Report or Project Review Sheet?

If no, submit project as planned.

If yes, call the Permit Specialists listed in your report to confirm whether permits are required.

If no permits are required, submit project as planned.

If permits are required, get estimates and add permit information to your workplan and budget for the full application.

# ADDITIONAL SUPPORT

## Guidance Document

Available at <https://fpr.vermont.gov/land-and-water-conservation-fund>

## Next Webinar : Pre-Application Materials

Thursday, Nov. 5 at 1:00PM

## Office Hours

Tuesday, Nov. 19 at 2:00 PM

Tuesday, Dec. 10 at 10:00 AM

## Email

ANR.FPRrecreationGrants@vermont.gov



# Questions and Answers

