



Land & Water Conservation Fund Stateside (LWCF) 2025 Grant Program

Current Grant Round open: June 2 – August 28, 2025

Presented July 19, 2025 – Funding Webinar Logistics



by Kristal McKelvey DCR-PRR Chief Recreation Grants Manager

Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)

LWCF Act of 1965

- Administered by the U.S. Department of Interior – **National Park Service**
- A Federal, State and Local Partnership with a **State Assistance Program**
- Provides a **50% matching-fund reimbursement** towards acquisition and/or development projects for **public outdoor recreation areas and facilities**
- **Entire Park Property** is **protected in perpetuity** with guaranteed public outdoor recreation access – forever providing a meaningful resource for your community and future generations
- SCORP = Virginia Outdoors Plan
<https://www.dcr.virginia.gov/recreational-planning/vop>



Who Can Apply?

Eligible Applicants

- **Localities**
 - Town, City, County.
- **State Agencies**
 - DWR, DOF, or DCR, etc.
- **Tribes**
 - Federal and/or State recognized
- **Regional Recreation Authorities**
 - Legally recorded by General Assembly

Ineligible

Non-profits, charitable organizations, businesses, and individuals are **NOT** eligible

The '**applicant**' must ultimately be able to **hold and protect** the property forever with no change in ownership required or chance of dissolution of organization.

The **applicant** also must have ability to **fully fund** the project while waiting for the reimbursed 50% amount.

The applicant must have staff available to administer the grant through closeout.



Project Type: Acquisition

Eligible

- Lands, wetlands, waters for public outdoor recreation
- Add parcels to:
 - Developed park areas
 - Undeveloped areas for passive recreation

Ineligible

- Land that is not currently available to the public – parks already owned by the applicant not eligible

The ENTIRE park property boundary will be protected

- Must be a 'Fee Simple' acquisition to ensure full ownership rights and public access with ability to ensure provisions of LWCF Act
- Can be accomplished through purchase, transfer, or donation (depends on scope of project)
- **Value** is based on [UASFLA appraisal](#)
 - Appraisal is completed within 1 year of project submission
 - Independently reviewed
 - Costs of appraisal, legal fees, due diligence, surveys NOT eligible for match reimbursement



Acquisition – Recreation Opportunities

- Must have a plan for how the land will be available for public recreation within 3 years
- Existing structures need to support outdoor recreation uses
 - Future structures must support public outdoor recreation
 - Maintenance and equipment storage buildings may support outdoor recreation

Variety of public outdoor recreation uses or needs (*not limited to this list*):

- | | |
|--------------------|----------------------------|
| ✓ Water Access | ✓ Camping |
| ✓ Walking | ✓ Hunting |
| ✓ Wildlife viewing | ✓ Horseback Riding |
| ✓ Swimming | ✓ Backpacking |
| ✓ Fishing | ✓ Sports fields and courts |
| ✓ Picnicking | ✓ Boating |
| ✓ Biking | ✓ Bicycling |
| ✓ Hiking | ✓ Playgrounds |

Trails. LWCF assistance may be available for the development of land or water-based trails primarily for outdoor recreation activities such as nature walks, hiking, bicycling, horseback riding, paddling, and exercising. The trails can connect parks with communities or other parks, be within parks, or serve as stand-alone recreation features. Trail projects can also include supporting features such as trailheads, overlooks, and turnouts.

- Support facilities – parking, utilities, roads, sanitation systems
- Trail hostels, trail shelters (simple roof or cover)
- Kiosks, wayfinding or directional signage
- Equipment rental spaces



Project Type: Development

Properties already owned/protected by the applicant

ENTIRE park property will be included in the “**LWCF Boundary**”

- **Consider future uses or needs of other park areas, and individual parcels included in the LWCF boundary. Needs to be compatible with LWCF, and cannot be sold or converted to non-public recreation uses.**

Fund development that provides:

- Public access to park areas and meaningful experiences
- Accessible amenities and resilient infrastructure
- Safe experiences and promotes healthy communities
- Protects the community investment of the shared area

Project type examples (review NPS manual for criteria):

- | | | |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------|--|
| ○ Parking | ○ Pools | ○ Support Facilities |
| ○ Restroom Facilities | ○ Pickleball/Tennis Courts | ○ Operation and Maintenance facilities |
| ○ Renovating Facilities | ○ Boating Facilities | ○ Shoreline Stabilization* |
| ○ Accessible Facilities | ○ Trails* | ○ Beautification |
| ○ Ball and Sports Fields | ○ Camping Amenities | |
| ○ Playgrounds | ○ Fishing/Hunting | |
| ○ Splashpads and/or Outdoor | ○ Target Ranges | |



Project Type: Development

Tip: Provide a clear project scope with a realistic budget

- Describe what you ***can accomplish*** within 3 years
 - Scope can be one recreation component, a larger park plan, or can be the same type of recreation amenity at multiple park sites
- Ensure the budget is up-to-date and aligns with current costs
 - Important for scoring and also carefully reviewed by NPS
 - Pre-planning expenses (up to 3 years from award date) as match
- LWCF requires 'Build America, Buy America' compliance
 - Construction products must have certification documentation
- Follow procurement requirements
- Construction must begin within 1 year of project award
 - Reasonable timeline including permitting requirements, purchase of products
- Ask yourself – is my park plan 'ready enough'?
 - Local community and governmental support
 - Very clear plan of what to accomplish – where, how, when
 - Able to complete the State and Federal environmental/historical reviews*



Project Type: Renovation/Redevelopment

Many older parks are ready to bring facilities to newer standards that better serve community needs

- Bring facility(s) and/or amenities up to accessibility and resilient standards
- Obsolescence – Deteriorated, and usefulness is impaired or needs to be upgraded to meet public health, safety, and recreation needs
 - Adaptation of new or existing outdoor facilities for barrier-free experiences (see VOP Section 2.2)
 - Change recreation use (pool to splashpad; resurfacing trails; replacing lighting; court to pickleball)
- Meets recommendations within the Virginia Outdoors Plan 2024 (Section 2.1.4)

Generally, funding is allowed for rehabilitation unless due to willful neglect and inadequate maintenance – clearly indicate the need and reason.



Project Type: Renovation/Redevelopment

Many parks need to adapt facilities to meet the local ecological or environmental factors

Protection of the recreation and natural values of the area

- Floodplain resiliency – relocation of facilities or design of resilient infrastructure
- Invasive species removal, landscape restoration, native planting
- Natural shoreline or riverbank stabilization – for resiliency and ecological restoration
 - Must be part of onsite recreation development greater than or equal the cost of the stabilization work
 - Beach nourishment is *ineligible*
- Meets recommendations within the Virginia Outdoors Plan 2024 (See Section 3)



Project Type: Combination

Acquisition plus Development and/or Renovation

Examples

- A Fee Simple property is paired with development of park amenities
 - In certain instances, the appraised value of the donated property may be used as match
- Acquisition of property from a private owner that already has structures that can be renovated for recreation support uses
- One governmental entity transferring property to an eligible applicant that will perform on-site amenity improvements



Ineligible Project Types/Costs

Review the NPS manual and DCR LWCF website

- **Indoor** Facilities – recreation centers, dining, restaurants, lodges, hotels, etc.
- Facilities for **professional** sports
- Acquisitions of **historic** sites and structures
- **Regular** operation and maintenance
- **Condemnation** of any kind
- **Indirect costs/Incidental costs**
- Equipment **purchases**
- Interest expenses, taxes, contingency reserves



A Message About Conversions

“Any property so acquired and/or developed may not be wholly or partly converted to other than public outdoor recreation use without approval of NPS pursuant to the LWCF Act ((54 U.S.C. § 200305(f)(3)) and conversion requirements outlined in regulations (36 C.F.R. § 59.3).” – NPS LWCF Manual

The project sponsor is responsible for maintaining the LWCF Boundary and public use of the entire park. If a conversion were proposed:

Multiple year process that **should be avoided** – you are the first line of protecting these parks.

- **Immediately** consult DCR with a map of proposed impact area and full description of potential impact. DCR consults with NPS
- Must determine a **replacement land** of equal or greater economic value as well as reasonable recreation usefulness and location
- All properties would require appraisals, appraisal reviews, full NEPA and NHPA, multiple levels of reviews, and final approval by the U.S. Department of Interior (DOI) Secretary



A sign with logo must be displayed at park

Funding Information

Minimum grant award request is **\$125,000**

(for a total project cost of \$250,000)

Maximum grant award request is **\$2 million**

LWCF is a Match Reimbursement Federal grant program

Funds are reimbursed 50% after project completion and fulfillment of the project grant award agreement (e.g. project scope accomplished, proof of payment)

Cannot use other Federal Funding for Match (other than RTP and CDBG)

Cost principles of 2 C.F.R. Part 200 will be followed in determining the allowability and allocability of costs.

Minimum of 6 (six) months from time of DCR application to NPS award.



What to be aware of up front:

- **Is there clear ownership?**
 - Deed research, clear title, and boundary confirmation
 - Verified seller and plan for required timeframe
- **Surveys may be needed**
 - Possible requests for Historical, Cultural, and/or Archeological Surveys from DHR or Tribal Consult
 - Field studies for rare, threatened, or endangered species
 - Floodplain analysis and/or wetland delineation
- **Projects with multiple and/or complex components may require more extensive design and engineering work than more basic park plans.**
 - Where are you in that timeline? If it has not begun it may not make it through the process in time.
- **Please determine if your timelines and available funds are sufficient.**
- DCR staff can help guide through the processes but cannot do the coordination
- **Do not begin project acquisition or construction** until all outstanding compliance issues are satisfied

Environmental & Cultural Review

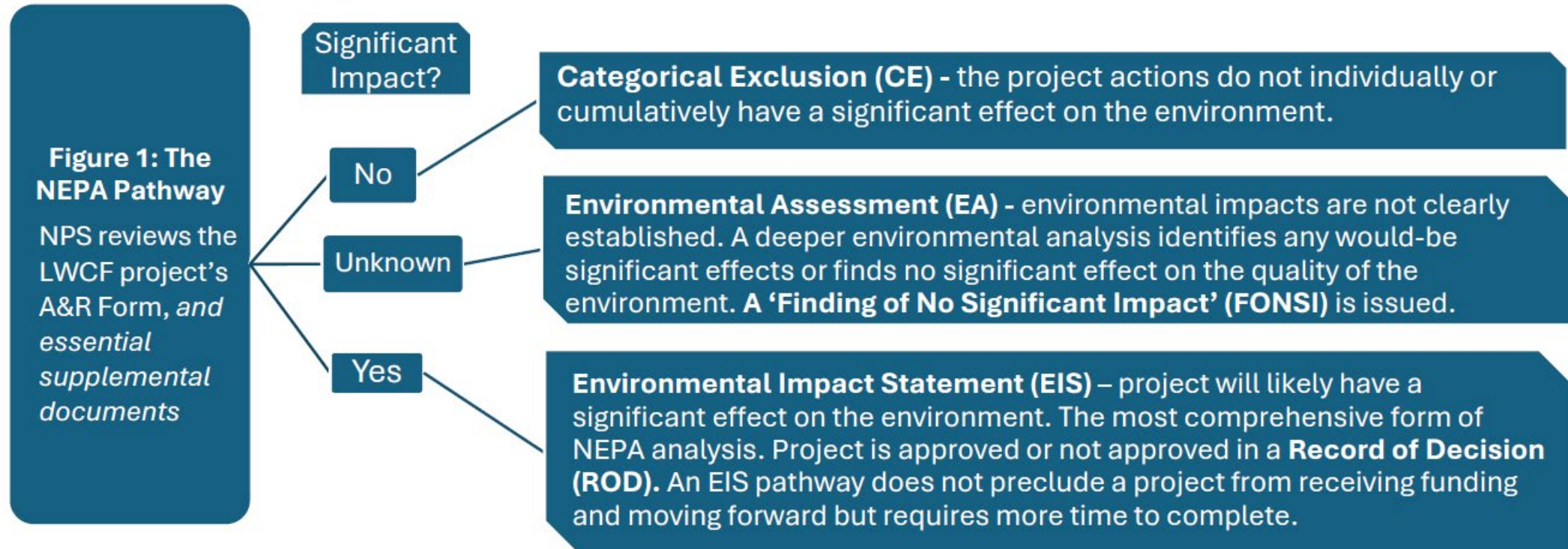


Figure 1: The NEPA Pathway

- **Map – be consistent** through the review process with project boundary, area of potential effect, current land conditions.
- **Project description** – include depth of disturbance and the scope of LWCF proposed work; include it is for consideration for Federal LWCF Grant Funding

Environmental & Cultural Review

Section 106 – Historical & Cultural Resource Review

Determine Area of Potential Effects - Department of Historic Resources

https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/pdf_files/Defining_Your_APE.pdf

Closely read the process in the Environmental Review Requirements Document

Multiple steps including the National Park Service must consult with Federally Recognized Tribes

Request for Survey:

If there is a request for a Phase 1 Survey, the review pauses until completed.

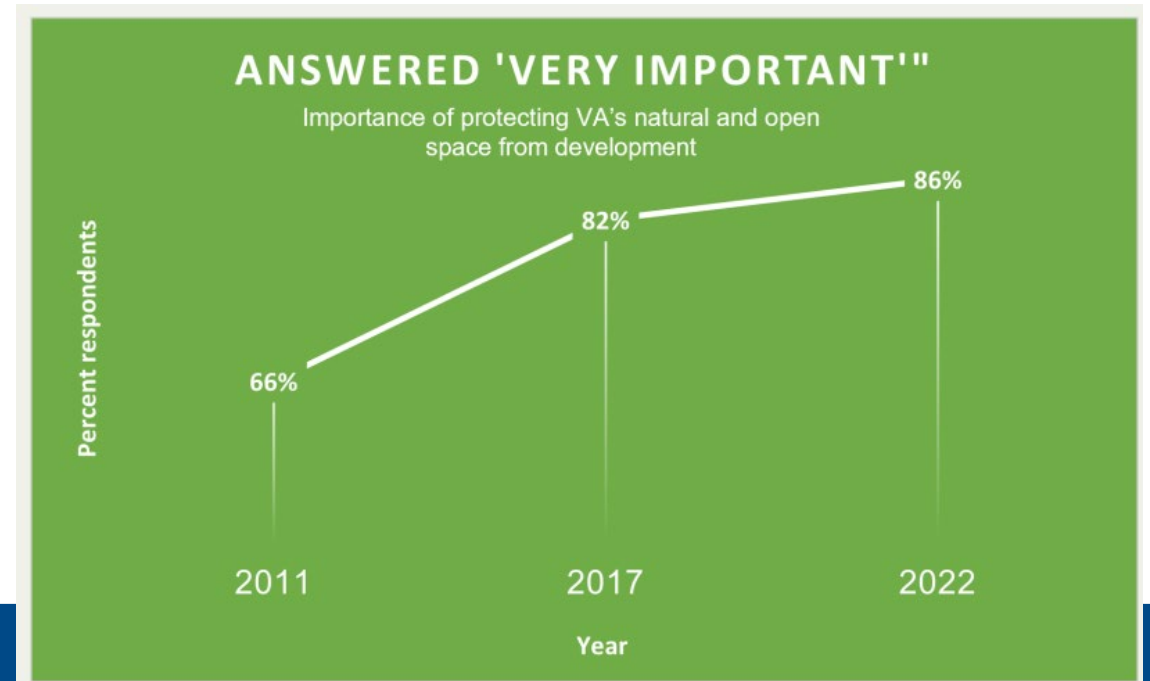
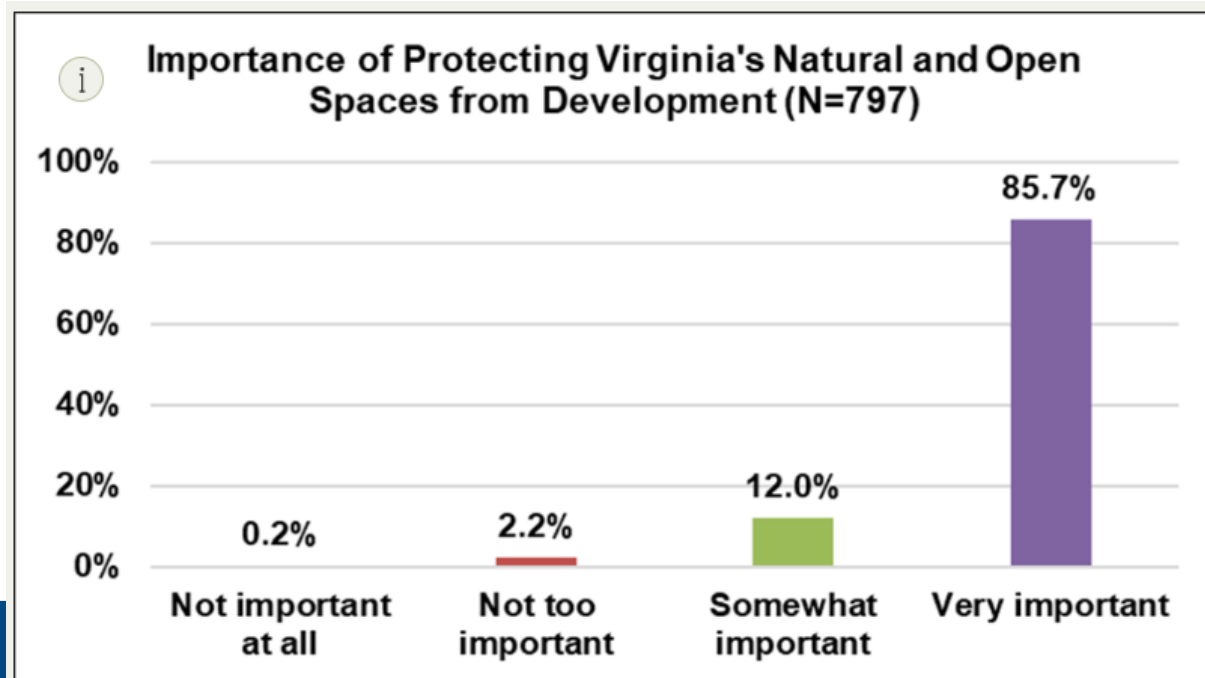
Costs associated with Survey may be added to the project budget or used as match if approved by NPS

Projects will not be NPS approved without Section 106 resolution.

Thank you!

The LWCF program has helped over 440 parks become protected for Virginia's community, visitors and future generations. They contribute to individual health, ecological resiliency, economic value, and so many more positive net benefits.

We hope that you will put the effort in to consider applying for an LWCF grant. We care and want to help you succeed in making your park project a reality.



This workshop does not contain all the information and applicant responsibilities associated with LWCF.

Applicants must fulfill to all state and federal requirements.

Refer to NPS LWCF Manual Version 72.1 (April 2025)

<https://www.nps.gov/subjects/lwcf/lwcf-manual.htm>

Contact Information

APPLICATIONS DUE AUGUST 28TH BY 4 P.M.
to RecreationGrants@dcr.virginia.gov

All Emails Subject Line = Park Name and Locality/Agency

To discuss specific project details for eligibility:
Kristal.McKelvey@dcr.virginia.gov

To have map boundary verification or VOP assistance:
Allison.Tillett@dcr.virginia.gov

For assistance with downloading or using forms:
RecreationGrants@dcr.virginia.gov