

Announcement of Federal Funding Opportunity Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership Program

Agency Name – Department of the Interior, National Park Service, State and Local Assistance Division, 1849 C Street NW (2225), Washington, DC 20240

Funding Opportunity Title – National Land and Water Conservation Fund Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership Program

Funding Opportunity Number – P14AP00134

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number – 15.916, Outdoor Recreation – Acquisition, Development, and Planning

Dates – Pre-applications are due from the State Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) lead agencies to the National Park Service (NPS) by 10pm EST on Friday, August 15, 2014. It is expected that the State LWCF lead agencies will establish earlier deadlines for project sponsors to submit their proposals for review and consideration for nomination to the national competition. The pre-applications must be submitted to the NPS via Grants.gov. Note that it may take Grants.gov up to two (2) business days to validate or reject an application. Please keep this in mind when developing your submission timeline; we recommend that you do not wait until the last moment to try to submit.

Executive Summary. Eligible U.S. state and local government agencies and federally-recognized Indian tribes (requirements described below) are advised that the NPS State and Local Assistance Division is soliciting proposals for nationally-competitive grant funding from the LWCF. The program is targeting projects that would acquire and/or develop public land for outdoor recreation purposes located within or serving jurisdictions delineated by the Census Bureau from the 2010 Census as having populations of 50,000 or more people and consisting of densely settled territory. A list of the areas was published in the *Federal Register* on March 27, 2012 (77 Fed. Reg. 18652-18669). Grants require a minimum of 1:1 match from state, local, or private sources. It is anticipated that projects funded under this announcement will have a grant start date between January 1, 2015 and April 1, 2015. The program authorities are 16 USC 460l-4 et. seq. and P.L. 113-76, Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2014.

FULL TEXT OF ANNOUNCEMENT

I. Funding Opportunity Description

The LWCF State and Local Assistance Program was established to assist in preserving, developing and assuring accessibility to present and future generations of U.S. citizens and visitors “such quality and quantity of outdoor recreation resources as may be available and are necessary and desirable for individual active participation in such recreation and to strengthen the health and vitality of the citizens of the U.S.” This is accomplished in part by authorizing and providing grants to States, and through

States to local units of government and federally-recognized Indian tribes, for projects that acquire lands and waters for parks and other outdoor recreation purposes, as well as develop new or renovate existing outdoor recreation facilities. LWCF grants support a wide range of outdoor recreation uses such as city parks, playgrounds, picnic areas, campgrounds, bike trails, swimming pools, and sports fields; along with infrastructure that supports these activities such as restrooms. Outdoor recreation areas and facilities assisted by the LWCF must be open to the general public and not limited to special groups.

The LWCF State and Local Assistance program is operated by the NPS in partnership with designated lead agencies in each of the 50 States as well as American Samoa, the District of Columbia, Guam, the Northern Marianas Islands, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands. To be eligible for funding, States must have a current Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) in place that assesses demand and need for outdoor recreation resources and sets priorities for the use of LWCF funds in the State. The NPS must review and approve each State's SCORP, which is updated at least every 5 years.

Each fiscal year Congress appropriates money from the LWCF for this program, which traditionally is allocated to the States based on a legislative formula. For Fiscal Year 2014, Congress appropriated \$42 million for the formula program plus an additional \$3 million specifically designated for a new competitive grant program. This announcement addresses how interested parties may apply for grants under the competitive program. A separate announcement – P14AS00001 – is posted to provide information about grants from the formula program.

For this inaugural competition, the NPS is targeting projects that will create or reinvigorate parks and other outdoor recreation spaces located in jurisdictions delineated by the Census Bureau for the 2010 Census as comprising densely settled territory that contains 50,000 or more people. A list of the areas was published in the *Federal Register* on March 27, 2012 (77 Fed. Reg. 18652-18669). Further, the NPS will prioritize projects that seek to directly connect people to outdoor places in their communities; engage and empower underserved communities and youth; provide opportunities for youth employment or job training; involve and expand public-private partnerships, particularly to provide for the leveraging of resources; and rely on a high degree of coordination among all levels of government, to improve recreation opportunities for all. In addition to the competition objectives, projects must advance goals or meet needs identified in their specific State's SCORP.

The process for applying for a competitive grant will begin at the State level. Each State's lead agency for LWCF will be allowed to nominate up to two projects to the NPS for consideration in the national competition. The lead agency will be responsible for soliciting project proposals from other State agencies, local units of government and federally-recognized Indian tribes, and conducting the initial review and evaluation to select the top candidates. Entities interested in applying must contact the lead agency to get specific details about their State's process for identifying projects for this competition. A list of agency contacts can be found at: http://www.nps.gov/ncrc/programs/lwcf/contact_list.html.

Nominated projects will receive a technical review by NPS staff to confirm the eligibility of the applicant, the project, and its costs consistent with the LWCF Act and the *LWCF Federal Financial Assistance Manual* (LWCF Manual; v. 69, October 1, 2008);

<http://www.nps.gov/ncrc/programs/lwcf/manual/lwcf.pdf>); and will also receive a panel-based merit review according to the evaluation criteria described in Section V (“Application Review Information”) of this Announcement. The panel will score each project, resulting in a ranked list of projects that are considered eligible for funding. The NPS will then request final grant applications (see section VI, Award Administration Information) for the projects in ranked order within the available amount of funding.

All prospective applicants should be aware that Section 6(f)(3) of the LWCF Act (P.L. 55-578, 16 USC 460/8(f)) requires that any park or other outdoor recreation area that benefits from assistance from the LWCF, whether for acquisition or development activities, must be maintained for outdoor recreation purposes forever. This requirement is applied to the park or recreation area as a whole, regardless of the extent of the LWCF assistance in the project (for more information see Chapter 6.B.5 of the LWCF Manual). Each project will have a boundary map mutually agreed to by the NPS and the project sponsor that will document the extent of the area subject to the 6(f)(3) requirement. An assisted park may be released from this requirement only with the approval of the Secretary of the Interior, which is contingent upon the project sponsor replacing the area to be converted with a new recreation area involving land of at least equal value and reasonably equivalent recreational utility. Project sponsors must agree to this requirement as a condition of receiving a grant. Prospective project sponsors should carefully consider their ability and willingness to comply with this provision of the Act before applying for a grant.

The authority for the LWCF State and Local Assistance Program is 16 U.S.C. § 460/4 et seq. Excerpts of relevant sections of the LWCF Act can be found at http://www.nps.gov/ncrc/programs/lwcf/lwcf_act.pdf.

The LWCF Manual establishes the eligibility, procedural, and programmatic requirements for LWCF grants. It outlines the criteria and process for eligible states and territories to develop a SCORP, nominate projects to the NPS, and implement grants for selected projects.

II. Award Information

Congress has made \$3 million available for this competition in FY 2014. The maximum amount of competitive funds that may be requested per proposal is \$500,000. There is also a minimum level of \$250,000. With these limits the NPS expects 6 to 12 projects will receive funding. States may supplement the proposal budget with LWCF formula funds if match is available, however, these funds will not be considered as part of the leveraging (see Section V).

The NPS anticipates initial selection of projects in September 2014, followed by submission of final applications and actual award of grants during the first or second quarters of FY 2015. The standard period of performance for LWCF grants is generally 3 years, however, for purposes of this competition, projects that can be completed in a shorter timeframe will be favored. Projects will be evaluated for their readiness (i.e., will begin within one year of grant award) and likelihood of completion within the stipulated period of performance. Applications should include a narrative description of the timeline of the project including discrete benchmarks that support the project’s completion.

All awards will be given as grants. LWCF grants are subject to the terms and conditions described in the LWCF Manual as well as the LWCF Project Agreement General Provisions, found at http://www.nps.gov/ncrc/programs/lwcf/forms/lwcf_general_provisions.frm.pdf.

III. Eligibility Information

In general, States (to include the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico); state political subdivisions such as cities, counties, and special purpose districts such as park districts; and federally-recognized Indian tribes that are organized to govern themselves and perform the functions of a general purpose unit of government, are eligible to apply for LWCF grants. However, to be eligible for this competition the political subdivisions or tribes must represent or otherwise directly serve one or more of the 497 jurisdictions delineated by the Census Bureau for the 2010 Census as comprising densely settled territory that contains 50,000 or more people. A list of these areas was published in the *Federal Register* on March 27, 2012 (77 Fed. Reg. 18652-18669). Individuals, nonprofit organizations, and private organizations are not eligible.

Each State has a lead agency designated by the State's Governor or by legislation for the purposes of implementing LWCF in that State. Only the lead agency can be a primary applicant for an LWCF grant; the NPS cannot make grants to entities other than the state lead agency. Applications submitted directly to the NPS by entities other than the lead agency will automatically be rejected. The lead agency applies on behalf of itself or for other state agencies, political subdivisions, and Indian tribes. The lead agency will be responsible for: reviewing proposals for completeness and eligibility requirements; prioritizing proposals according to the competition criteria and the State's Open Project Selection Process; ensuring that proposals are consistent outdoor recreation priorities outlined in the State's SCORP; and nominating up to two proposals to the national competition. If a proposal selected for funding, the lead agency will also be responsible for submitting the final application to the NPS. Grants will be awarded to the lead agency, which will be responsible for ensuring that allocated funds are used for the purposes of and in a manner consistent with this program, including funds awarded to an eligible sub-applicant.

Cost Sharing

Section 6(c) of the LWCF Act requires that grants be matched at a minimum ratio of 1:1 with non-Federal funds. Matching funds may be derived from state, local, non-governmental or private sources in the form of cash or in-kind contributions. Certain federal grant program funds may also count towards the non-Federal match if their enabling legislation authorizes that treatment. Eligible sources of match and other cost-sharing requirements are detailed further in LWCF Manual Chapter 5. This competition will favor projects that involve partnerships among the public, private, and non-profit sectors that support the leveraging of resources (e.g., money, donations of land, supplies, services, etc.) and the extent of that leverage to allow the project budget to exceed the 1:1 match required by the LWCF Act.

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

- Project costs that were incurred before the grant start date, except for certain planning and compliance costs, without the approval of the State lead agency and the NPS.
- Any funds or in-kind contributions such as land or services that have been previously used to satisfy the matching requirements of this program or that have been or will be used to satisfy the matching requirements of another Federal grant.
- Any funds or in-kind contributions such as lands or services that were or will be acquired with Federal funds. Unless otherwise provided by Federal law, funding that originated from Federal sources or the value of land or services acquired with Federal funds may not be used as non-Federal match.

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

Other

No more than two applications per state lead agency will be accepted.

LWCF grants may be used for the acquisition or development (or a combination) of lands and facilities that will provide outdoor recreation opportunities to the public. Acquisition of land may be in fee or a lesser interest (e.g., a perpetual easement) as long as some form of public access is provided. On the development side, LWCF assistance is available for most types of facilities needed for the use and enjoyment of outdoor recreation areas. This includes things like sport and other playing fields, parks and picnic areas, water-based recreation facilities such as pools and spray parks, trails, campgrounds, boating facilities, etc. Certain kinds of support facilities, such as restrooms, may also be eligible. For either project type, to be eligible the project sponsor must possess sufficient legal title and control of the property to be assisted to ensure that it can be managed and maintained for outdoor recreation in perpetuity and otherwise remain compliant with Section 6(f)(3) of the LWCF Act. Chapter 3 of the LWCF Manual describes project eligibility and implementation requirements in detail.

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

If a project is selected, the project cost estimate defines the maximum federal share that can be requested. This is intended to prevent changes in the scope of the project after selection that might alter the competitive nature of the project. (Note this is a departure in policy from grants awarded under the formula program, which do allow for increase cost amendments in some cases.)

IV. Application and Submission Information

Address to Request Application Package

The full funding opportunity announcement and pre-application materials are available online at <http://www.grants.gov>. Prospective project sponsors should check with their State lead agency for LWCF to determine if the State has any other requirements for submitting proposals at the State level.

For further information contact: Elisabeth Fondriest at 202-354-6916 or elisabeth_fondriest@nps.gov, or Joel Lynch at 202-354-6905 or joel_lynch@nps.gov.

Content and Form of Application Submission

For the purposes of conducting the competition, the NPS will review and evaluate projects based on pre-applications. The pre-application must include all Required Elements, described below. Projects will be scored and ranked in a national context based on an evaluation of how the project meets the review and selection criteria for the competition and the general requirements of the LWCF Act. Therefore it is critical that applicants follow the guidelines outlined below to be able to address each element as completely and accurately as possible. Supplemental Elements, also described below, are not required at this time but will be required before an award if the project is selected for funding. However, submitting one or more Supplemental Elements with the project proposal may help substantiate the project's "readiness." The requested elements are designed to solicit a minimum level of necessary information to facilitate evaluation and ranking of the proposed project in a national competition. Project sponsors are advised that the pre-application does not include important documentation needed to substantiate the project's compliance with environmental and historic/cultural resources laws (i.e., NEPA, NHPA), and that such documentation will be required if their proposal is selected. Further, selection of the project could be revoked if development of these documents reveals a previously unknown issue that materially affects the project's eligibility or feasibility of completion. If this occurs, the NPS will move to the next project on the ranked list.

Required Elements

- Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424)
- Project narrative (target length: 5 pages)

This narrative provides the opportunity to broadly describe the purpose, planned accomplishments, and goals/expected benefits (short and long term) of the project in terms of improving recreation opportunities for a community. It should address how the project relates to the goals of the competition. It should also specifically explain how the LWCF assistance will be used.

For acquisition projects, provide the reason(s) for the acquisition, the number of acres to be acquired, and a description of the property. Explain whether the acquisition creates a new public park or recreation area or expands an existing site. Describe and quantify the types of resources and features on the site (e.g., 50 acres of forested area, 2,000 feet of waterfront, scenic views, vacant lot, special habitats, unique or special features, recreation amenities, historic/cultural resources) as well as any constraints (e.g., hazardous materials/contamination history, restrictions, institutional controls, easements, rights-of-way, reversionary interests, above ground/underground utilities, etc.). Describe the plans for the site's development for recreation purposes and the timeframe, including when the site will be made open and accessible for public outdoor recreation uses. Describe the current status of the acquisition, including negotiations with the landowner, completion of due diligence (title work, appraisals).

For development projects, provide the reason(s) for the development and a description of the physical improvements and/or facilities that will be developed with LWCF assistance. Explain whether the project involves new development, rehabilitation, and/or replacement of existing facilities. Describe and quantify the types of resources and features on the site as well as any constraints. Describe the timeframe for completing the project, and when site will be opened (or reopened) and accessible for public outdoor recreation uses. In addition, include a site sketch depicting improvements, where and how the public will access the site, parking, etc.

For projects that will comprise acquisition and development provide a narrative that combines the elements above.

For all types of projects, the narrative should address:

- How the project supports other initiatives and long term plans within the city.
- How the proposal implements statewide outdoor recreation goals as presented in the SCORP (include references), and how this proposal was selected based on the State's Open Project Selection Process (OPSP). Also, how the project implements or supports priorities of other relevant planning documents.
- The new types of outdoor recreation opportunities and capacities that will be created as a result of the acquisition and/or development.
- Current use or disposition of the property and activities and uses planned for the project site after acquisition and/or development.
- Who holds or will hold title to the property (does/will the sponsor have adequate control and tenure); who will manage/operate the property; how will the property be maintained and permanent protection assured?
- Explain any existing non-outdoor recreation or non-public uses that are intended to continue on the site(s) and/or proposed in the future within the 6(f) boundary.
- The process that led to the development of this proposal. Your narrative should address:

a. How the interested and affected public was notified and provided opportunity to be involved in planning for and development of the proposal? Who was involved and how were they able to review the completed proposal, including any state, local, federal agency professionals, subject matter experts, members of the public and Indian Tribes. Describe any public meetings held and/or formal public comment periods, including dates and length of time provided for the public to participate in the planning process and/or to provide comments on the completed proposal.

b. What information was made available to the public for review and comment? Did the sponsor provide written responses addressing the comments?

- Criteria Narratives (target length: 5 pages, or about one-half page per criterion)

Project sponsors should provide narrative statements describing how the project addresses each of the eleven criteria outlined in Section V. These narrative statements provide an opportunity for sponsors to describe in more detail and highlight the expected impacts and benefits of their project. The evaluation of the projects will be based mainly upon the review of the criteria narrative statements, so it is essential that an accurate but concise narrative be prepared for

each criterion. Each narrative statement should provide sufficient information to substantiate claims, but should not exceed one (1) page in length. Each narrative statement should be addressed separately in the order listed.

- Budget narrative

The project budget should break down, describe, and justify project costs that correspond to the details of the work activities outlined in the project narrative. If an indirect rate will be charged to the grant, this cost should be presented in the budget proposal. Chapters 3 and 5 of the LWCF Manual address eligible costs for LWCF grants. Land acquisition costs should be based on appraised value or other estimate of fair market value. If the overall cost of the project exceeds the amount of requested LWCF funds plus matching share, then the larger project should be described but it should be clear how the LWCF funding and match fit in. Note that the LWCF and match funded element of the project must still result in a viable recreation opportunity that is not reliant on other funding even in the context of a larger planned project.

List all source(s) and amount(s) of financial match to the LWCF federal share. The value of the match can consist of cash, land donation, and in-kind contributions. If the project match exceeds the 1:1 requirement indicate how the funds/in-kind contributions will be used. Describe any additional sources of funding or resources, particularly if they are from partners in the project, which will be used to complete the project and whether they are available or still being secured. If applicable, describe how the LWCF monies will play a role in leveraging funding for the project. If a state chooses to include LWCF formula funding in the project, this will not be considered as part of the leveraging.

Other federal resources may not be used as a match for the LWCF grant unless such treatment is specifically authorized in the other funding source's enabling legislation. Project sponsors should provide a citation for the legal authority.

- Project Location and Site Maps

Two maps should be submitted: 1) a neighborhood/community map showing the general location of the project and any existing recreation resources adjacent to the project site; 2) a map or aerial photo clearly delineating the specific project site to be acquired and/or developed, including the proposed boundary area of the project as required by LWCF Section 6(f)(3).

Supplemental Elements

The following supplemental elements are not required with the pre-application, but if the proposal is selected for funding, these elements and forms would be required for review before grant funds could be awarded. The noted forms are available on the LWCF program website at

<http://www.nps.gov/ncrc/programs/lwcf/pub.htm>

- Budget forms and assurances appropriate for the type of project (SF-424C/D)
- Proposal Description and Environmental Screening Form (PD/ESF)
- Description and Notification Form (DNF)
- LWCF Project Agreement
- Pre-award Onsite Inspection Report (if not performed as part of the PD/ESF; State-specific)

- Approved indirect cost rate agreement (if applicable)
- Copy of an approved waiver of retroactivity (if applicable)

Submission Dates and Times

Pre-applications are due from each state LWCF lead agency by 10:00pm EST on Friday, August 15, 2014. The NPS will accept pre-applications that have at least reached the validated stage in Grants.gov by the stipulated time, based on the time/date stamp in Grants.gov. Applicants are advised that it can take up to 2 business days for Grants.gov to validate an application so it is best to not wait until the last moment to try to submit. Applicants will receive emails from Grants.gov as their application progresses through the submittal process, including when the application has been received by Grants.gov, when it has been validated, and when it has been forwarded to the NPS. Email confirmations can be affirmative or negative so you should review them to ensure that the application successfully completed the step. Applications not received by the deadline will not be considered.

Complete and final applications (i.e., including the Supplemental Elements noted above) for selected projects will be solicited following the initial review and selection process; the deadline is anticipated to be during the first or second quarter of FY 2015. Final applications will also be submitted via Grants.gov.

Intergovernmental Review

Applications under this program are subject to Executive Order 12372, "Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs" for states that participate in this process. A list of the participating states and the clearinghouse points of contact can be found at http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants_spoc.

Funding Restrictions

Certain expenses are ineligible for LWCF funding, including:

- Grant administrative expenses,
- Incidental costs related to land acquisition such as appraisals or title work,
- Operation and maintenance activities,
- Facilities that support semi-professional or professional athletics such as baseball stadiums or soccer arenas,
- Indoor facilities such as recreation centers or facilities that support primarily non-outdoor purposes like dining facilities or certain overnight accommodation (such as a lodge or hotel), or
- Acquisition of lands, or interests in lands, that completely restrict access to specific persons (e.g., non-residents of a community).

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

Other Submission Requirements

A pre-application for each stand-alone proposal must be submitted electronically via Grants.gov. Applications sent by mail, email, or facsimile will not be accepted. State lead agencies that do not currently have a Grants.gov account are encouraged to begin the process of registering as soon as possible. No more than two applications per state will be accepted. In the event that more than two are submitted, only the first two received will be reviewed. For questions about using Grants.gov or resolution of technical problems experienced in the use of Grants.gov should be directed to the Grants.gov Contact Center at 1-800-518-4726.

V. Application Review Information

Criteria

Relevance of proposed project to core program goals (70 points out of 130 total)

1. The extent to which the project will improve physical access and recreational services and address a neighborhood/community recreational deficiency (up to 20 points).

Higher priority will be given to projects that acquire and/or develop a new park/recreation opportunity in a neighborhood with no other such resources within a reasonable service area, or significantly rehabilitate or enhance an existing park/recreation opportunity in a neighborhood with no other such resources within a reasonable service area, or is otherwise severely underserved. Lower priority will be given to projects that acquire and/or develop a new or significantly enhance an existing park/recreation opportunity in a neighborhood that has other recreation opportunities.

A “reasonable service area” for a neighborhood park is generally the area within a one-half mile or a 10 minute walk. For parks or recreation spaces serving multiple neighborhoods or a community in general, the distance is up to 1 mile.

Expected responses should articulate how the project fills an unmet need within the neighborhood/community. The maps provided as part of the application should be used in describing the project. Photos of the site area are also strongly encouraged.

2. The extent to which the project will improve recreation service to economically-disadvantaged neighborhoods/communities (up to 20 points).

Higher priority will be given to projects that will improve outdoor recreation opportunities for target neighborhood/community populations including significant populations of youth, minorities, and/or low and moderate income residents, for whom serious recreation deficiencies exist. Lower priority will be given to projects that improve outdoor recreation opportunities in neighborhoods/communities that do not contain significant populations of youth, minorities, and/or low and moderate income residents.

Expected responses should include US Census tract data indicating the proportion of the population within the census tract(s) and for the overall city. Census-defined minorities are African-Americans, Hispanics, American Indians, Asians, Eskimos, Aleuts, and Pacific Islanders.

3. The extent to which the target community participated in project development and the extent of support of government agencies and elected officials (up to 10 points).

Higher priority will be given to projects that originated from citizens, neighborhood leaders, or community groups, particularly youth and youth groups, within the community that will be served by the project. Priority will also be given to projects that are supported by public agencies and elected officials and those that will employ and/or provide job training opportunities for youth and/or veterans (or to a lesser extent, provide opportunities for volunteer service). Lower priority will be given to projects with little to no community support or that do not provide employment, job training, or volunteer opportunities.

Expected responses should describe citizen/youth participation/support and engagement in the project. Letters (or emails) of support from citizens, public agencies, and elected officials (local to national) may be included as appropriate. The response should also describe or document opportunities for employment, job training, or volunteer service, particularly for youth and veterans.

4. The extent to which the project will advance an innovative solution and/or transform a non-park/recreation land use (up to 10 points).

Higher priority will be given to projects that offer unique and innovative aspects such as with park placement, design, or retrofit of facilities, and/or plans to convert non-park/recreation land uses or distressed properties to a new or enhanced park that will be a community recreation asset that better meets current needs. Lower priority will be given to projects that would result in effective recreation facilities and services but will be accomplished through common or standard approaches.

Expected responses should describe any unique or innovative aspects of the project. If appropriate, descriptions should be supported by photos, renderings, or architectural or similar plans.

5. The extent to which the project will advance or deliver complementary and/or intrinsic benefits over and above the provision of new or enhanced park or outdoor recreation space (up to 10 points):

Higher priority will be given to projects that are likely to result in additional tangible benefits in one or more of following areas: economic development; health and wellness; environment (e.g. protecting local ecosystems, green infrastructure, etc.); historical, cultural, or archaeological resource protection; and/or arts and culture. Lower priority will be given to projects that provide only recreation benefits.

Expected responses should include, by benefit category, sufficient descriptions and specific documentation outlining any other potential benefits expected to be gained from the project. Descriptions should be supported by or referenced other documentation such as plans, photos, etc.

Financial Support and Leveraging (30 points out of 130 total)

6. The extent to which the project will leverage financial or in-kind support from sources in the public, private, and/or non-profit sectors and addresses the match requirement of the LWCF Act (up to 20 points).

Higher priority will be given to projects involving multiple and diverse partnerships and that exceed the required 1:1 match, especially from non-public sources. Lower priority will be given to projects that don't involve partnerships and/or that meet only the minimum required 1:1 match solely with project sponsor funds.

Expected responses should list and briefly describe the nature and extent of involvement in the project by any public, non-profit, or private partners. Any commitments of financial or in-kind resources to meet the required match, especially in excess of the 1:1 level, should be articulated and documented if possible.

7. The impact of the federal investment per capita (up to 5 points).

Higher priority will be given to projects with per capita cost of less than \$1.00; lower priority will be given to projects with a per capita cost that exceeds \$10.00. This will be assessed by dividing the Federal grant share by the 2010 US Census Jurisdiction total population for the city in which the project is located.

Expected responses should include the 2010 US Census total population of the city in which the project is located and total Federal share being requested for the project.

8. The viability and reasonableness of the project budget as it relates to the scope of work (up to 5 points).

Higher priority will be given to clear and detailed projects budgets that contain cost items that are reasonable and clearly related to the project's scope. Priority will also be given to projects where funding to cover the entire project budget is mostly in place (excluding the grant amount), particularly any amounts promised as overmatch. Lower priority is given to poorly detailed and/or unrealistic project budgets where limited funding is available beyond the amount needed to match the requested grant and additional would be needed to complete the entire project.

Evaluation of this criterion will be based on project budget and cost estimates submitted with the application. Expected response should also include certification of the availability of the matching share, including overmatch funds if applicable.

Technical Merit and Qualifications of Applicant (30 points out of 130 total)

9. The strength of the project's alignment with the State's SCORP and specific priorities of any community/regional/state revitalization or economic development plans (up to 10 points).

Higher priority will be given to projects that address a specific SCORP priority or goal as well as that of other city, regional, state, and/or national-level comprehensive, master, community revitalization, and/or economic development plans. Lower priority will be given to projects that only generally align with broad SCORP goals.

Expected responses should specifically identify the relevant SCORP priority(ies) or goal(s) that the project will address. The response should also reference/web link and explain any similar connections of

the project to goals or priorities of applicable city, regional, state, and/or national-level comprehensive, master, community revitalization, and/or economic development plans or initiatives, if any.

10. The readiness of the project (up to 10 points).

Higher priority will be given to projects that exhibit a high degree of confidence that they can begin within one year and be completed in three. Priority will also be given to projects where work that would support review for NEPA or NHPA compliance purposes is already done or where complications appear unlikely. Lower priority will be given to projects with plans are still at the concept stage and/or the project seems to face implementation challenges, and where the timeline is scoped out only in broad terms.

Expected responses should include a sufficiently detailed narrative to support the project's timeline, such as documenting that acquisition parcels are under contract and/or and development permits are approved, as well as specifically articulate the project's likely ability to get through NEPA and NHPA review without issues.

11. The capacity of the applicant and partners in the project (up to 10 points).

Higher priority will be given to project sponsors who can demonstrate past success in: accomplishing LWCF-assisted and/or similar projects; administering LWCF or other federal grants; and managing and sustaining parks or other recreation resources to ensure long-term viability and remain compliant with the legislatively-mandated LWCF Section 6(f)(3) protections. Lower priority will be given to projects where the sponsor has known problems in implementing previous LWCF projects, managing federal grants, issues or challenges with park and outdoor recreation management, and/or has currently outstanding LWCF 6(f)(3) compliance issues that are being poorly managed.

Expected responses should articulate past grant/project performance and/or issues and entail assurances about sustaining park operations and LWCF Section 6(f)(3) protections.

Review and Selection Process

Once an application has been received from the State lead agency, NPS LWCF Program staff will conduct an initial screening and a technical review of each proposal to determine compliance with requirements, completeness of the application, and eligibility of proposed costs and purposes and uses of the property. All qualifying proposals will be evaluated and scored individually in accordance with the assigned weights of the above evaluation criteria by independent peers in a field review. Each proposal will be reviewed by at least 3 (three) reviewers. Both Federal and non-Federal experts may be used in this process. If time and resources permit, there may be a supplemental panel review.

The reviewers will evaluate the proposals, score them based on the criteria listed above, and submit individual ratings. The scores will be presented to the Competition Managers and averaged for a final score. No consensus advice will be given in the field review but will be if a panel is convened.

The merit reviewers' ratings will be used to produce a rank order of the proposals. Their recommendations and evaluations will be considered by the LWCF program staff who will recommend the project to the program's selecting official, the Director of the NPS, that a final list be ranked in order

unless the proposal is justified to be selected out of rank order based upon the appropriate selection factors, listed below.

The selecting official may choose to recommend a proposal out of rank order based upon:

- Availability of funding;
- Geographic distribution of projects and/or funds;
- Program objective and priorities (see sections I.A. and I.B. of this announcement);
- The applicant's prior performance in managing LWCF grants and/or assisted sites; and/or
- The project's capacity to leverage non-Federal dollars.

Applicants may be asked to modify objectives, work plans, or budgets, and to provide supplemental information prior to approving a final grant application.

When a decision has been made (whether an award or declination), summaries of merit reviews and panel deliberations, if any, will be made available to the proposer upon request. Declined applications will be held by the NPS for three years, in accordance with the current retention requirements, and then destroyed.

Anticipated Announcement and Award Dates

Proposal review will begin in August 2014. A ranked list of proposals should be completed in September 2014. The NPS will select proposals from the ranked list within the amounts available. The NPS will then request final grant applications for projects selected for funding shortly thereafter. The proposed project timeline should assume an award start date between January 1, 2015 and April 1, 2015.

VI. Award Administration Information

Award Notices

The NPS anticipates advising the State lead agencies in early Fall 2014 of whether their nominated project(s) have been preliminarily selected for funding. Final selection of projects is contingent on the State submitting a complete application containing the supplemental elements detailed in this announcement and it being deemed approvable. Final applications will be due most likely no later than the end of calendar year 2014. After submission of a final grant application, a project award agreement will be signed by the applicable Agreement Officer for the LWCF Region in which the project's state is located and sent to the lead agency. The lead agency will then, if appropriate, make a sub-award to a local sponsor. In no case will NPS make an award directly to a local project sponsor.

Administrative Requirements

The project proposal must meet the *LWCF Federal Financial Assistance Manual* (v. 69, published October 1, 2008) and the LWCF General Provisions (http://www.nps.gov/ncrc/programs/lwcf/forms/lwcf_general_provisions.frm.pdf)

All prospective applicants are reminded that Section 6(f)(3) of the LWCF Act (P.L. 55-578, 16 USC 460/-8(f)) requires that any park or other outdoor recreation facility that benefits from assistance from the LWCF, whether for acquisition or development activities, must be maintained for outdoor recreation purposes forever. This requirement is applied to the site as a whole, regardless of the extent of the LWCF assistance in the project, unless the NPS agrees to a more limited area. Each project will have an approved boundary map that will document the extent of the area subject to the 6(f)(3) requirement. An assisted park may be released from this requirement only with the approval of the Secretary of the Interior, which is contingent upon the project sponsor replacing the area to be converted with a new recreation area involving land of at least equal value and reasonably equivalent recreational utility. Project sponsors must agree to this requirement as a condition of receiving a grant. Prospective applicants should carefully consider their ability and willingness to comply with this provision of the Act before applying for a grant.

Reporting

The NPS requires State lead agencies to provide annual performance and financial reports for all grants. These are generally due within 30 days of the report period. Reports must summarize project activities conducted during the report period and provide a current status of the project, including any issues. Financial activity (billings) is also reported. Within 90 days of the expiration of the project period or the completion of the project, whichever comes first, state lead agencies must submit a final report with required supporting documentation. Evidence of completion of the project and compliance with program requirements must be provided before the NPS will authorize a final payment on the grant. Chapter 7 of the LWCF Manual further describes reporting requirements.

VII. Agency Contact(s) - Required

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VIII. Other Information

Information about the LWCF State and Local Assistance Program, including the LWCF Federal Financial Assistance Manual, can be found on the NPS' LWCF website at <http://www.nps.gov/lwcf>. The full funding opportunity announcement is available via the grants.gov website: <http://www.grants.gov>. Application materials are available via the Grants.gov and LWCF websites or by contacting the program officials identified above. It may also be helpful to review your state's LWCF website (if applicable) and

State's SCORP, many of which are posted on or linked from the LWCF site. A list of links to State LWCF sites is here: http://www.nps.gov/ncrc/programs/lwcf/contact_list.html.

This program is currently funded for one year only. However, \$3 million for a second competition has been included in the President's budget proposal for FY 2015. Prospective applicants are advised that this competition represents only a small portion of the total funding allocated to the LWCF State and Local Assistance Program in FY 2014. Grants may be available from your state for the regularly apportioned funds as well. You should contact your state's lead agency for more information: http://www.nps.gov/ncrc/programs/lwcf/contact_list.html

It is anticipated that the total amount requested for funding will significantly exceed the available funding. Neither the NPS nor the Department of the Interior will be responsible for proposal preparation costs or project costs if the proposal fails to receive funding. Publication of this announcement does not oblige the NPS to award any specific project or to obligate any available funds.