



Land & Water Conservation Fund Stateside (LWCF) 2025 DCR Grant Round

Grant Round open: June 2 – August 28, 2025

Webinar presented June 11, 2025



by Kristal McKelvey DCR-PRR Chief Recreation Grants Manager

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>

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**
- Property is **protected in perpetuity** with guaranteed public outdoor recreation access – forever providing a meaningful resource for your community and future generations



Who Can Apply?

Eligible Applicants

- **Localities**
 - Town, City, County, etc.
- **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 |





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, 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)

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



Grant Round Timeline

- Aug 28 – Sep 30: Committee Scoring
- Early Oct –selected applicants contacted to move forward, site inspections
- Oct 31 – all compliance documents due
- Nov 2025 – Jan 2026: DCR – NPS coordination for project review
- Jan - Mar 2026 – awarding process
- April 2026 expected start date (*Acquisition, Development, Combination projects*)





Gateway/Progress Forward

- DCR Staff and LWCF Committee determines if project meets LWCF program requirements
- DCR contacts applicant, conducts an on-site inspection, discuss project details
- All Real Estate deed research and ownership verification is completed
- All required NEPA/Section 106 must be completed
 - Agency correspondence satisfied; surveys completed if required
 - Official letterhead PDF's
 - DCR & NPS will review to complete a final determination
- Project is DCR-approved for Federal 'grant portal' submission
- Project is reviewed by NPS and, if approved, is awarded (Notice of Award)
- Project Sponsor (applicant) receives sub-award agreement
- Grant Agreement is signed by Project Sponsor and DCR
- Project can begin!



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

The [DCR LWCF 2025 Application Manual](#) (PDF) contains details about eligibility, match requirements, rules, regulations and application procedures.

The following templates and forms are for the 2025 LWCF Grant Round. These documents have been modified for the 2025 LWCF Grant Round. DCR PRR Grants staff will complete the required Federal SF form.

[Download all files as a zip file.](#)

- [LWCF-01 DCR Grant Round Application](#) (Word) - Please refer to this carefully to ensure a full grant application is completed
- [LWCF-02-NPS Application Form](#) (Word) - *please note that this document was updated for 2025
- [LWCF-03 - Example Location Map](#) (PDF)
- [LWCF-04 - Example LWCF Boundary Map](#) (PDF)
- [LWCF-05 Budget Worksheet and Narrative Example](#) (Excel)
- [LWCF-06 –Timeline](#) (Word)
- [DCR LWCF 2025 Grant Round Scoring Criteria for reference](#) (PDF)

- **Additional required documents:**

Refer to Checklists available in the 2025 Application Manual and Grant Round Application. Refer to the [Environment Review Guidance document](#) (PDF) for recommended steps to complete required compliance for NEPA and NHPA.

Provide PDF's of agency correspondence with the park name and agency.

- Please refer to [Open Project Selection Process \(OPSP\) 2025-2030](#) (PDF) for further information about the LWCF Grant Round general procedures and definitions.

Application Package

Fewer documents to complete this year but download and read all of them as they have been updated.

<https://www.dcr.virginia.gov/recreational-planning/lwcf>

- DCR Application Checklist
- NPS application form – leave all content – only fill out applicable sections
- Budget – what applies directly to project
- Timeline has clear guidance
- Environment Review – new this year!
- Maps – assistance available
 - allison.tillett@dcr.virginia.gov
- Email address for application submission by **August 28th at 4:00 pm**
 - recreationgrants@dcr.virginia.gov



DCR Application & Documents

The DCR Application follows the DCR LWCF 2025 Application Manual

- **Checklist:** Refer to Appendix A & *Environmental Review Guidance Document*
 - Pre-screening NEPA and Section 106 documentation. Initial agency contact.
 - Save each item as a PDF. Use same naming (i.e. “Park Name-USFWS iPAC Report”)
Checklist: Additional Items, if selected: final agency letters for NPS review
- **Section A:** direct contact dedicated to project administration
- **Section B:** Project Details = Q 12 [Accessibility](#) & 13 reference [VOP Featured Projects Dashboard](#)
- **Section C:** Important information to confirm property details and ensure acreage is consistent; LWCF sites can be viewed on [VOP Mapper](#)
- **Section D:** Coincides with Scoring Criteria – give the committee enough information to fully understand the project application but succinct;
 - Source the VOP material, survey results, and/or dashboards as appropriate

NPS Application (A&R Form)

All Projects	As applicable
<input type="checkbox"/> SF 424	<input type="checkbox"/> Intergovernmental review comments
<input type="checkbox"/> SF 424C	<input type="checkbox"/> Relevant NEPA/SEPA documents
<input type="checkbox"/> SF 424D	<input type="checkbox"/> Applicable federal law compliance
<input type="checkbox"/> Project narrative	<input type="checkbox"/> Proof of flood insurance
<input type="checkbox"/> Project budget	<input type="checkbox"/> Proof of cold climate criteria qualification
<input type="checkbox"/> NHPA documentation(SHPO correspondence, surveys, etc)	<input type="checkbox"/> Leases, Rights-of-Way, MOA's, MUA's, etc.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Location map	<input type="checkbox"/> Use schedule (school parks)
<input type="checkbox"/> LWCF boundary area map (proposed)	<input type="checkbox"/> Dingell-Johnson certification
<input type="checkbox"/> Pre-award site inspection report	<input type="checkbox"/> Waiver of retroactivity approval
<input type="checkbox"/> Evidence of ownership or other site control	
<input type="checkbox"/> Description and Notification Form	
<input type="checkbox"/> Project abstract	
Acquisition & Combination Projects	
<input type="checkbox"/> SF 429 Cover sheet and Attachment B	<input type="checkbox"/> conceptual design plan
<input type="checkbox"/> parcel map for acquisition parcel(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> donation acknowledgement (if applicable)
<input type="checkbox"/> UASFLA-compliant appraisal summary and review*	* If not available, include other basis for g value
Development & Combination Projects	
<input type="checkbox"/> site development plan	Grants with Indirect Costs
<input type="checkbox"/> building floor plan(s) if grant-funded	<input type="checkbox"/> Current or proposed Indirect Cost Agreement
	<input type="checkbox"/> SF 424A (optional - if costs not shown in 4 and budget narrative)

DCR will complete the checklist, but these are why we need to ask for so many documents from you!

It is a unique format... do the best you can.

- Unnecessary items have been noted 'leave blank'
- Leave all content – only fill out applicable sections
- ☐ New project grant application (fill out section 1.0, 2.0 with relevant sub-section(s), and 3.0):
 - ☐ Acquisition (fill out section 2.1)
 - ☐ Development/Renovation (fill out section 2.2)
 - ☐ Combination Acquisition & Development/Renovation (fill out both sections 2.1 and 2.2)
- Section 3.0 builds the knowledge to make informed decisions about impacts to the natural and human environment
- Pre-screening resources are essential to answer questions in Tables 1 and 2
- *Permits = if your work is in an 'aquatic' environment, recommend contacting Army Corps of Engineers and/or Virginia Marine Resource Commission, and floodplain administrators promptly

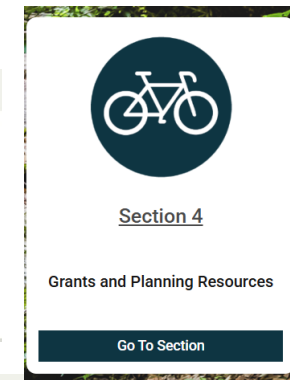
ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW REQUIREMENTS

LAND & WATER CONSERVATION FUND APPLICANTS

PROCESS GUIDANCE - 2025

<https://www.dcr.virginia.gov/recreational-planning/document/2025-environmental-review-and-cultural-resources-guidance.pdf>

- Plan for sufficient time! Need to be pre-screening project details now
- Many responses take 30 days or more
- Goal is the letters come in prior to application submission
 - This will help applicant and DCR Grants staff
 - At least be sure everything has been submitted to all required agencies by August 28



Screening resources for your project

These external mappers and tools can help prepare the project for future assessments and regulatory reviews at both the state and federal levels

1. VA Wildlife Resources* VaFWIS - pre-screen your project area for monitored species. Screening Tool ↗	2. VA Conservation and Recreation* NHDE - Pre-screen your project area for Natural Heritage resources. Mapper ↗	3. VA Environmental Quality WetCAT - Pre-screen your project area for wetlands and hydric soils . Mapper ↗
4. VA Conservation and Recreation VFRIS - Pre-screen your project area for flood risks. Mapper ↗	5. VA Historic Resources* VCRIS - Pre-screen your project area for cultural and historic resources. Mapper ↗	6. Tribal Directory Assessment Tool TDAT - Identifies tribes that will be consulted under Section 106. Mapper ↗

*Complete registration to use mapper or tool

<https://vop-vdcr.hub.arcgis.com/pages/navigating-federal-and-state-requirements>

Environmental & Cultural Review

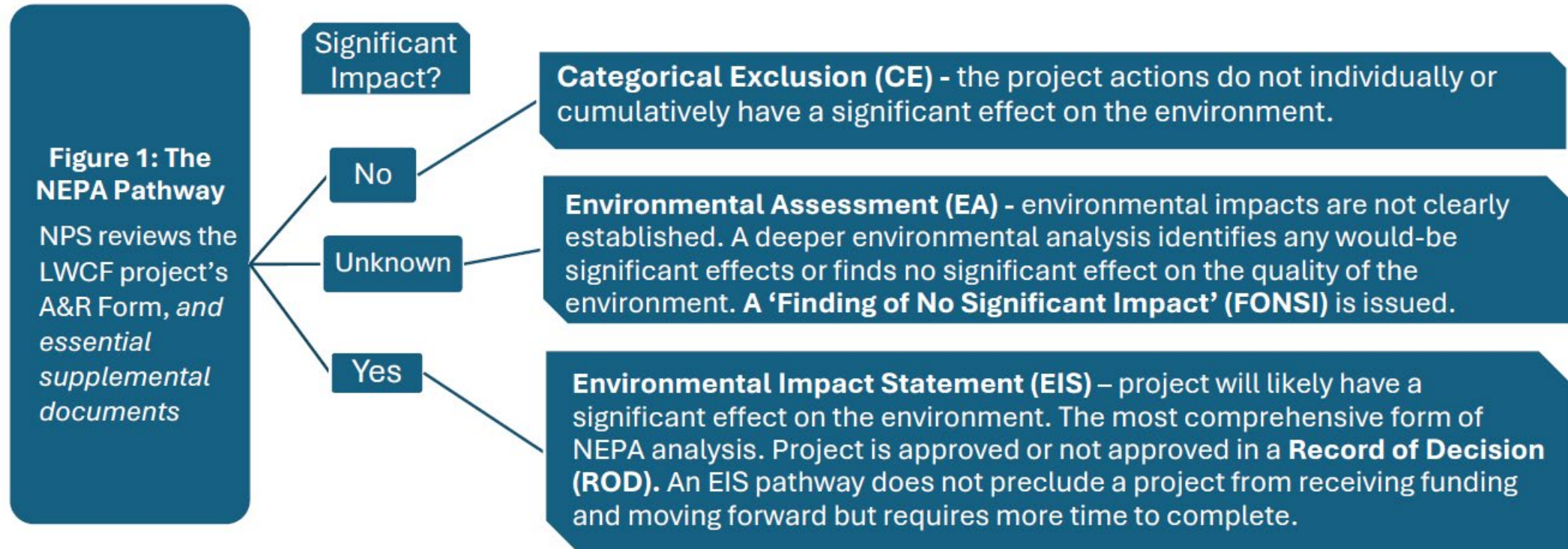


Figure 1: The NEPA Pathway

- **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.

Project Administration

Federal and State Procedures must be followed.

Please refer to the documents available on the DCR LWCF website shown below.

LWCF Project Administration

For all active LWCF Project Sponsors, please review the following guidance documents during administration of your project. There are example documents for drawdown procedures as well as templates to use. They can be downloaded below or contact us if you are not able to download them.

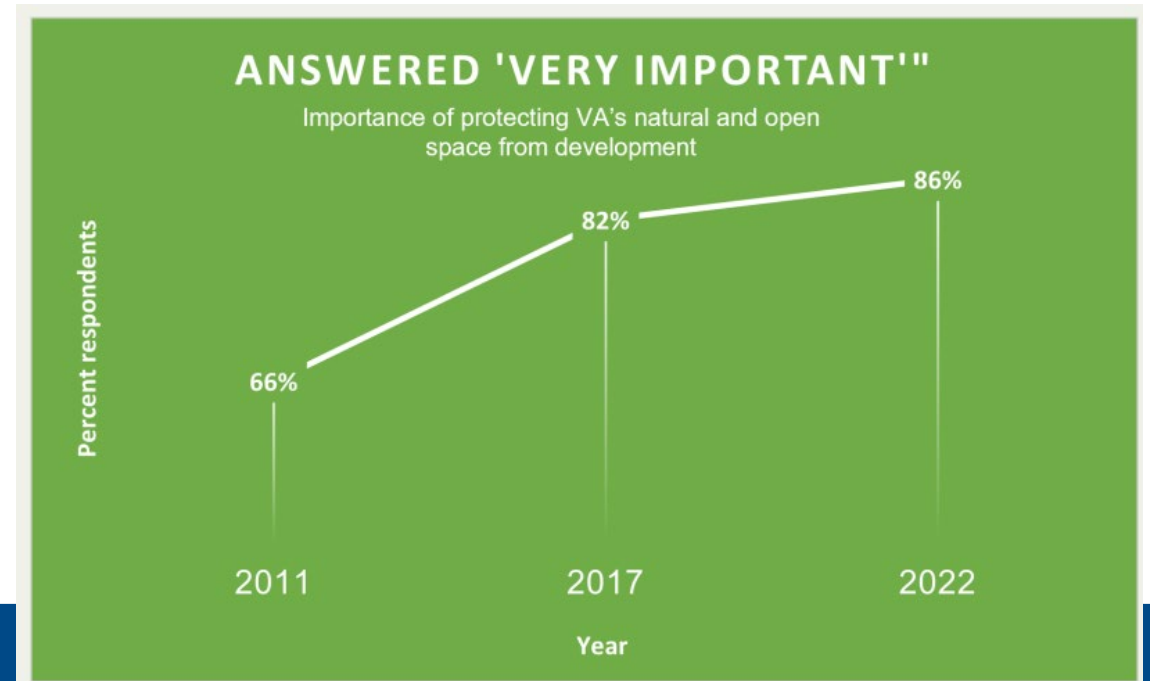
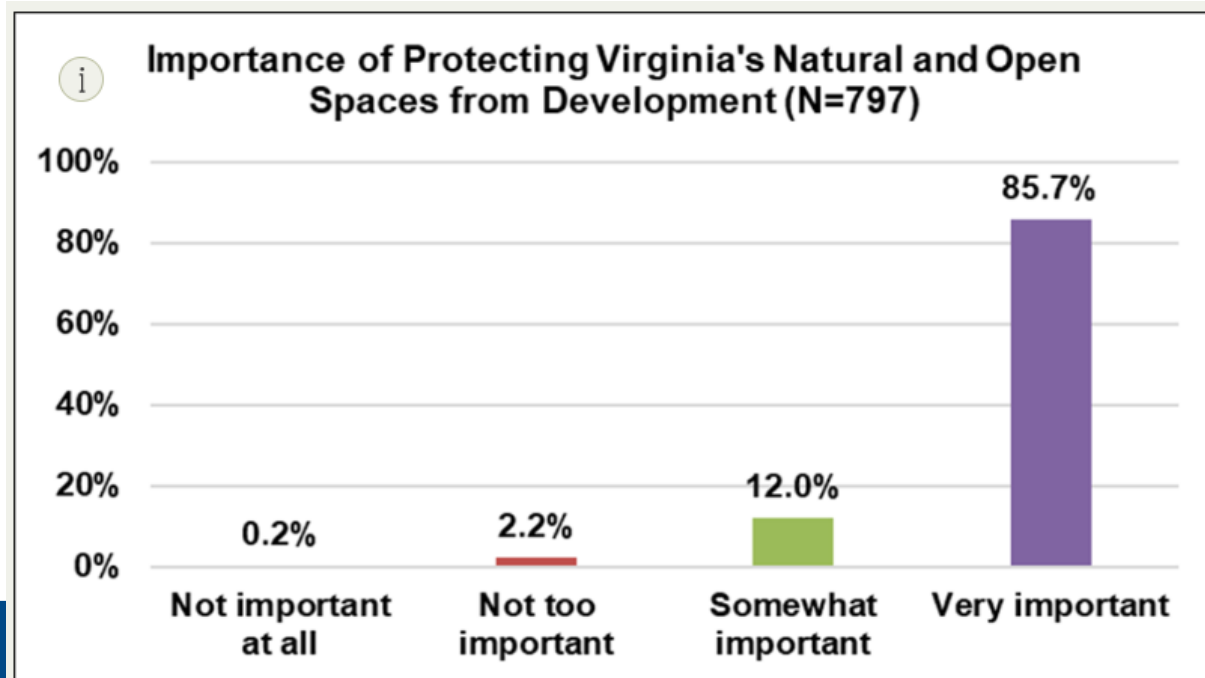
- [2025 LWCF Drawdown Request and Closeout Guide](#) (PDF)
- [LWCF-Daily Equipment Record](#) (Word)
- [LWCF-Data Sheet Summarizing Employee Labor](#) (Word)
- [LWCF-Data Sheet Summarizing Invoices](#) (Word)
- [LWCF-Data Sheet Summarizing Volunteer Labor](#) (Word)
- [LWCF-Drawdown Certification Form](#) (PDF)
- [LWCF-Drawdown Certification Form](#) (Excel)
- [LWCF-Example Drawdown Package](#) (PDF)
- [LWCF-Procurement Procedures Briefed](#) (PDF)
- [LWCF-Quarterly Report Template](#) (PDF)
- [LWCF-VA W9 Form](#) (PDF)
- [LWCF-Volunteer Daily Timesheet](#) (Word)

- **Eligible** funding for reimbursement must be in original approved budget
- Federal and State **procurement procedures** must be followed and documented correctly
- Provide quarterly reports
- Drawdowns (reimbursements)
 - Can be intervals for development projects
 - Last reimbursement will come after final inspection and project closeout
 - Acquisition projects drawdown after all property transferred and paid

Thank you!

The LWCF program has helped over 420 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.



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