




MEMORANDUM

TO: All City and County Chief Elected Officials
Regional Planning and Development Councils
West Virginia Parks and Recreation Association
West Virginia AIA Chapter and state A&E Firms
Area Grassroots, Public Health and Business Organizations
Other Interested Parties

FROM: Mary Jo Thompson, Director 
Community Advancement and Development Division

DATE: December 7, 2017

SUBJECT: **Fiscal 2018 Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) Notice:
Invitation to Submit Applications**

BACKGROUND: With expected tourism growth in West Virginia, the State has an opportunity to enhance its communities while improving health outcomes for its residents and business outcomes for its communities' retail cores. Public parks are an essential part of the infrastructure of its communities. Park project funding through the State's Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) program for the Fiscal 2018 funding cycle will prioritize new or renovated public park spaces having demonstrated veritable collaborations by and between area businesses, community-based organizations and sponsoring units of local government which effectively increase promotion of a given community's culture, leisure or lived experience while encouraging healthy lifestyles.

Park design and construction may be small or part of a larger park's area but need to feature 'oasis' qualities including one or more of the following features or adjacencies for non-LWCF, indoor design elements: walking opportunities not dependent on access from a car, dining, family health or community wellness centers, different age-appropriate exercise or relaxation amenities, shade/sun/ and natural area sounds, landscaping, water exposure, pleasant views, natural plants, colors or flowers and/or space or facilities for social gatherings.

Park projects addressing the State's Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) priorities for capital repairs or replacement of physically or functionally obsolescent facilities or areas, barring projects judged to be the result of neglect or inadequate maintenance will still be considered, but would be enhanced if made part of the community core improvements described above.

COLLABORATIONS: The process of project design participation usually includes only informing and consultation of the public with a predetermined design proposal. This year's application review process both weighs and provides an opportunity to rethink the form and goals of this traditional approach with more expressive engagement of community grassroots groups, business and health organizations--including financial supports--for some potential development. "Do-it-Yourself" project proposals without expressed public design participation as to mutual benefits from a project's goals, priorities, and design criteria will be

difficult to recommend. Financial contributions towards—or other co-sponsorship supports in aid of—a given proposal by and between area businesses, visitor and convention bureaus, area business chambers, other community grassroots organizations and area public health organizations and institutions are encouraged, with a limited amount of additional time to develop the same being provided in the submission schedule.

FUNDING: The West Virginia Development Office (WVDO) receives and recommends project proposals to the National Park Service for their federal review and award decision. Project sites must be publicly-owned, maintained, and financially supported for half of a proposal's development costs. Proposed site improvements must be functionally complete and not staged or dependent upon subsequent funding to become operational. Any size project will be considered, however only one project will be recommended at a maximum \$400,000 funding level (\$800,000 total project cost). Project total costs in excess of the required, 50-50 matching share must document local overmatch sources.

To allow for minor deviations from grant limits, the WVDO Community Advancement and Development Director reserves the right to adjust award recommendations by ten percent within any remaining unobligated fund balance during a funding cycle. Units of government may submit more than one application at different funding levels to improve their competitive position or phase part of a comprehensive park development plan, however each project must be functionally complete and not dependent on subsequent funding to become operational. No community will be recommended for more than one grant award.

SUBMISSIONS: Design development, detailed budgeting and financing, public engagement and National Park Service form requirements need to be finished within a four-month period. Complete, single applications must be postmarked to the WVDO on or before **April 15, 2018**. Electronic submissions are allowed and encouraged **before** the submission deadline to allow the WVDO staff to advise and recommend any changes or additions necessary to have a complete or eligible application. Early contact helps establish the eligibility of the project sponsor, project and site as well as any major details for a potential grant application. Please call John McGarrity or James Bush of our staff at 304.558.2234 or by email to john.r.mcgarritty@wv.gov or james.e.bush@wv.gov for further references and information.

NPS Environmental Screening Forms (ESF) with a 01/31/2020 Expiration Date are available for download from the Park Service's website [nps.gov/subjects/lwcf/lwcf-forms] to include with State LWCF forms from the WVDO website [wvcommerce.org/people]. Besides the general, community core recommendations described here, our Open Project Selection Process (OPSP) evaluates projects according to a number of criteria including the following: originality with respect to concept and use of other resources, the applicant's park history including any deferred maintenance, any parkland conversions issues, any lack of progress with prior or current construction, any competition of the project proposal with the private sector, the project sponsor's handicapped access compliance, and the merits of the project's design as it relates to its completeness, quality, and readiness to be bid. Major application errors and omissions include: lack of detailed budgets, lack of documented match, lack of SHPO or other environmental clearance, lack of UASFLA-qualified appraisals on projects including land acquisition, land acquisition without development, and /or missing narratives from ESF or State application sections dealing with a project's description, justification or collaborations.