



Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation

Land and Water Conservation Fund



2024 Application Manual

The following documents, available at <https://www.dcr.virginia.gov/recreational-planning/lwcf>, should be referenced along with this guide:

- [NPS LWCF State Assistance Program Federal Financial Assistance Manual](#) (Version 72 - October 1, 2023)
- [National Park Service - Notice of Funding Opportunity](#)
- [Virginia's LWCF Open Project Selection Process](#)
- [Virginia Outdoors Plan](#) (2018)
- DCR LWCF [Environmental Review Requirements](#)
- DCR LWCF Scoring Criteria 2024

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II. LWCF Grant Round Overview

The Land and Water Conservation Fund State Assistance Program (LWCF) is a 50%-50% matching reimbursement grant program for the acquisition and development of public outdoor recreation sites and facilities. A key feature of the program is that sites assisted with LWCF funding must be open, operated, and maintained **in perpetuity** as **public outdoor recreation areas** and may not be converted to other uses without suitable replacement of equivalent parkland and approval by the U.S. Secretary of the Interior.

The LWCF is operated by the National Park Service (NPS) in partnership with designated lead agencies in individual states. The agency responsible for administering LWCF in Virginia is the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR).

LWCF monies are apportioned to the states by the Secretary of the Interior each federal fiscal year. The state (DCR) is responsible for submitting eligible project proposals to NPS. DCR is selecting projects through this competitive call for proposals, in accord with Virginia's Open Project Selection Process (OPSP). The full OPSP text can be found at <https://www.dcr.virginia.gov/recreational-planning/lwcf>.

Eligible grant recipients, referred to as project sponsors, include local units of government (state political subdivisions such as cities, counties, and Virginia recognized park authorities), state agencies, and federal or state recognized Indian Tribes. Non-profit organizations, associations, and other private entities are not eligible.

The minimum award amount for the 2024 grant cycle is \$250,000 and there is no maximum award amount, depending on available funding at the time of award and total requests. An estimated \$12,000,000 - \$14,000,000 in LWCF funding is available in this grant round as NPS has some projects that have not yet been authorized.

The application deadline for the 2024 VA LWCF grant cycle is **4:00PM on April 18, 2024**. All applications must be submitted electronically by this deadline. Late submissions will not be accepted.

After selection, project sponsors will obtain and submit to DCR in the subsequent months to complete the necessary planning and compliance documentation for review and submission to NPS. Sponsors must complete a project review in accord with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) **prior** to DCR submission of the project to NPS. The NPS grant acceptance period Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) which is to be determined projected for June/July 2024 for submission of this grant round's projects via Grants.gov. If projects cannot be submitted within six (6) months after grant round review they must be held until NPS announces and opens another grant acceptance period (dates to be determined by NPS). The more details and documentation completed for the proposed project, the sooner it can be submitted for NPS review and authorization.

This application manual provides an overview of the LWCF program in Virginia and is designed to assist in application submission. Full program details and requirements are subject to the most recent NPS LWCF manual, which currently is the [**NPS LWCF State Assistance Program Federal Financial Assistance Manual**](#), Volume 73.

This grant opportunity may be a good fit for your entity if:

- For **acquisition**: you have a willing seller who is patient and willing to allow appraisals and other research to occur during the application and authorization process. The full process minimally takes approximately one year but can take up to two years.
- For **development**: your development project is nearly ready for construction, or can move quickly to construction once awarded. Projects still in the scoping phase of project design but with approval to move through the design phase could still fit but may not be ready for NPS submission until later in 2024.
- You have already started or are ready to move quickly with a NEPA-level environmental review. DCR encourages you to coordinate with state agencies sooner rather than later to allow for their windows of response time (typically 30 days).
- You already have significant source/s of non-federal funds (or donated/ in-kind value) to leverage 1:1 with a LWCF grant award. For development projects, pre-approval project planning and design expenses may be eligible towards the project match with appropriate documentation and if expressed clearly in the application budget form.
- You are both responsive and patient. LWCF is often a “hurry up and wait” process, with tight pushes for deadlines and long periods of waiting on NPS action.

III. LWCF Program Requirements

To be eligible for either an acquisition or a development grant, the project must be on publicly owned land, or plan to acquire publicly owned land, and the project sponsor must possess sufficient legal title and control of the property to ensure that it can be managed and maintained for outdoor recreation in perpetuity and otherwise remain compliant with the conversion provisions of the LWCF Act (see [54 U.S.C. 200305\(f\)\(3\)](#)).

Outdoor recreation areas and facilities assisted by the LWCF must be open to the general public and not limited to special groups. All new parkland acquired with LWCF funds must be open to the public within three years of purchase, including provision of public access amenities (such as parking and general access). For development projects, construction must begin within one year of authorization and be completed and open to the public by the end of the three year project period. All project types must result in deed restrictions specific to LWCF language preventing conversions.

To be eligible for the funding, States must have a current State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) in place that assesses demand and need for outdoor recreation resources within its borders and sets priorities for the use of LWCF funds. The most recent SCORP in Virginia is the 2018 Virginia Outdoors Plan (VOP) which can be found at <https://www.dcr.virginia.gov/recreational-planning/vop>. The proposed project must align with priorities within the VOP, which is reflected in scoring criteria.

This manual provides a brief overview of the LWCF program, please refer to NPS Manual for additional information and guidance.

IV. Eligibility

A. **Eligible Project Sponsors** – *The following are eligible to apply for LWCF funding:*

- Municipalities (cities, towns, counties)
- Tribes (federal or state recognized)
- State agencies (Dept. of Forestry, Wildlife Resources, etc.)
- Regional park authorities identified in the [Code of Virginia](#)

Land trusts, non-profit organizations, planning district commissions, associations, educational institutions, and private individuals **are not** eligible to receive LWCF funding.

B. **Eligible Projects** - *Eligible project types fall into three categories: acquisition, development, and combination acquisition and development. The [NPS LWCF Manual](#) describes project eligibility requirements (Ch. 3) and eligible costs (Ch. 5) in detail.*

1. Acquisition

Acquisition of lands, wetlands, and waters for public outdoor recreation, including new areas or additions to existing parks, forests, wildlife management areas, beaches, and other similar areas dedicated to public outdoor recreation, as well as physical connections among them (e.g., trails, waterways, land between recreation areas, wildlife habitat corridors) are eligible for assistance in this category.

Acquisition of land must be in fee simple and may be accomplished through purchase, transfer, or by donation. The property must be opened for public use within 3 years of project authorization.

NPS authorizes federal funding for acquisitions based on the appraised value; all appraisals must be completed by a certified UASFLA appraiser. The appraisal must be within one year of project submission and it must also have a full review from a separate UASFLA certified appraiser. These expenses are not reimbursable.

In *very* limited circumstances, a lesser interest, such as a perpetual easement, may be authorized if sufficient rights allowing the public to access and recreate on the site would be provided and the project sponsor's ability to enforce the provisions of the LWCF Act in perpetuity must be ensured.

Areas acquired may serve a wide variety of public outdoor recreation activities including but not limited to:

- walking and driving for pleasure
- sightseeing or wildlife viewing
- swimming/other water sports
- fishing
- picnicking
- boating and water access
- hunting and shooting
- camping
- horseback riding
- bicycling
- pools or splashpads
- other outdoor sports and activities.

2. Development

LWCF assistance is available for the development of a wide range of outdoor recreation uses and the recreation facilities needed to support the use and enjoyment of these areas. NPS authorizes federal funding for development projects based on the detailed budget provided by the project sponsor that provides a realistic and fair valuation of all amenities to be constructed in the project scope. A clear budget with 50% Local and 50% Federal funding request is preferred.

A development project may consist of one improvement or a group of related improvements designed to provide basic facilities for outdoor recreation, including facilities for access, safety, security, health, and protection of the area, as well as those required for the outdoor recreation use of the area.

A project may consist of the complete or partial development of one area, such as a state park or a city playground, or it may consist of multiple sites such as a series of developments on a number of geographically separated areas under the same project sponsor such as picnic facilities in a number of parks. If your project is part of a larger scope, please clearly identify the specific portion of the project you are seeking LWCF funding for.

Development projects eligible for assistance, with certain exceptions, include but are not limited to the following facility types:

- Sports and playfields
- Picnic facilities
- Land or water-based trails and trailheads
- Swimming facilities
- Boating facilities
- Fishing/hunting facilities
- Public target range facilities
- Winter sports facilities
- Camping facilities
- Community gardens
- Renovations to eligible facility types
- Support facilities such as parking areas, restrooms, simple cabins, trail hostels
- Operations and maintenance facilities for park specifically

Please see list on DCR LWCF site [for ineligible project types](#).

For development projects, the non-construction planning expenses such as site investigation and selection, site planning, feasibility studies, preliminary design, environmental review and other federal and State compliance, preparation of cost estimates, preparation of construction drawings and specifications, and similar items necessary for project proposal preparation **may** be eligible for assistance, if incurred up to 3 years prior to final project submission to NPS. Proper documentation and justification must be provided including the funding source; these expenses can be applied to the project only if clearly described in the applications budget narrative specific to the project scope and subsequently authorized by NPS. A waiver of retroactivity approved by DCR and NPS with appropriate justification may be an option in limited circumstances.

3. Combination Acquisition and Development

Projects that include both acquisition as described above *and* development of outdoor recreation resources on the acquired site are eligible for funding. Please note that combination projects must comply with the individual requirements of acquisition and development projects, and that both the acquisition and all development must be completed within the three year LWCF project period.

C. Ineligible Projects and Project Costs - LWCF funds may not be used for (not inclusive):

- Indoor facilities such as recreation centers or facilities that support primarily non-outdoor purposes like dining facilities or overnight accommodations (such as a lodges or hotels, however simple lodging facilities that support outdoor recreation experiences may be eligible)
- Facilities for professional or semi-professional arts or athletics
- Acquisition of or restoration of historic sites and structures
- Acquisition of lands, or interests in lands, that completely restrict access to specific persons (e.g., non-residents of a community)
- Operation and maintenance activities
- Renovations necessary due to neglect or lack of proper maintenance
- Condemnation of any kind of interest in property
- Incidental costs related to land acquisition such as appraisals, surveys, or title work
- Indirect costs/ administrative fees, including in-house project administration
- Equipment to be used for maintenance including, but not limited to, automotive equipment, tractors, mowers, etc.
- Interest expenses, contingency reserves, and charges in excess of the lowest responsive bid when competitive bidding is required.

Acquisition project expenses that are **not** reimbursable include those relating to appraisals, surveys, and other incidental costs to the purchaser that are precluded by the LWCF Act.

****The NPS LWCF Manual describes project eligibility requirements (Chapter 3) and eligible costs (Chapters 5) in detail. Final eligibility determination is at the discretion of NPS. ****

V. Cost Share Requirement

The LWCF grant program aims to aid localities and states in leveraging funds for outdoor recreation, thus the program mandates a minimum 1:1 cost share (match reimbursement) from the project sponsor. This results in a maximum grant award of 50% of the total eligible project costs.

For example, if the purchase price of a new park property is \$800,000.00, the maximum LWCF grant award amount for acquiring the property is \$400,000.00. Please note that when factoring in ineligible costs such as appraisals, title work, and/or administrative expenses, LWCF grants often end up covering less than 50% of the total cost to complete the project.

Matching funds may be derived from state, local, non-governmental, or private sources in the form of cash or in-kind contributions of land, services, materials, etc. Eligible match items can be found in Chapter 5 of NPS LWCF Manual.

There are strict limitations on the use of federal funds as sponsor match. The only federal funds allowed as match are the Federal Highway Administration's Recreational Trail Program Grants and Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) Community Block Grants.

LWCF is a reimbursement program, thus project sponsors must be able to finance the project upfront while receiving periodic 50% reimbursements on eligible expended costs. All proofs of payment and invoices must be submitted. After appropriate closeout, acquisition projects are typically reimbursed as a one-time payment. All documentation related to fiscal transactions, proof of payment(s), final deeds, and other related documents must be submitted to DCR to be sent to NPS on behalf of the subrecipient/project sponsor. Final authorization of drawdowns and reimbursements is the responsibility of the National Park Service. The project sponsor, upon project authorization, must provide DCR with financial documents including Virginia W9 and Federal SAMS number to ensure accurate transfer of funds can be completed successfully. Development projects must provide as-design-built documentation, final boundary maps, and proof of completing all components of agreed upon park amenities.

VI. Perpetuity Requirements

As a condition of LWCF, the **entire park** in which the project is located must be put under permanent protection to be used for public outdoor recreation in perpetuity. This protection is recorded in the property deed. In the past, properties assisted with LWCF funds have been referred to as “**6(f)(3)c**” or “**6(f)**” **properties**, in reference to Section 6(f)(3)c of the LWCF Act, but now are referred to as “**LWCF-assisted areas**” and/or “**LWCF boundary areas**.”

Conversion of any LWCF funded properties to any uses other than public outdoor recreation is a lengthy process that must be approved by the U.S. Secretary of the Interior, and equivalent replacement property must be provided as a result of any conversions. Both DCR and NPS strongly discourage LWCF conversions.

The perpetuity requirement is applied to the assisted park or other recreation area as a whole. Exceptions for boundaries that would apply to a lesser unit of a park will be considered only if the unit is a stand-alone (i.e., its borders do not include other areas of the park), self-sustaining (i.e., it does not rely on adjoining park area for access, utilities, support facilities, etc.) recreation area. DCR and the NPS must agree to any boundary that does not comprise the whole park, and the NPS may eliminate from consideration proposals that are not consistent with this policy. Applicants who wish to propose a project with a boundary that would not include the whole park are urged to contact DCR prior to completing an application for a determination on whether the boundary *may* be accepted. DCR may coordinate with NPS to determine project eligibility and/or boundary discrepancies.

Restrictive Deed Wording

The following language is to be incorporated into the property deed of all LWCF-assisted areas and recorded in the city, town, or county court house of the project area. The deed with Tax ID Parcel information as well as attached plats or maps must be submitted to DCR to process the final drawdown and project closeout for authorized projects:

The property identified below has been acquired or developed with federal assistance provided by the National Park Service of the Department of the Interior in accordance with the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act of 1965, as amended, 16 U.S.C. 4601-5 et seq. (170 ed.). Pursuant to a requirement of that law, this property may not be converted to other than public outdoor recreation uses (whether by transfer, sale, or in any other manner) without the express written approval of the Virginia Department of Conservation & Recreation and the Secretary of the Department of the Interior, or their designee. By law, the Secretary shall approve such conversion only if it is in accord with the then existing Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) and only upon such condition as the substitution of other recreation properties that are of at least equal fair market value and of reasonably equivalent usefulness and location.

VII. Maps

Applicants must submit three maps with their application:

1. LWCF Boundary Area Map

The purpose of the LWCF Boundary Area map (formerly called the Section 6(f)(3) map) is to legally define the area being developed or acquired with federal LWCF grant money. This area will be given the protection of Section 6(f)(3) of the LWCF Act, which states that property acquired or developed with LWCF money shall not be converted to uses other than public outdoor recreation. The project area within the LWCF Boundary Area will become encumbered as an outdoor park recreational site in perpetuity.

Both acquisition and development projects must submit a boundary area map. It is preferred that development applications include a metes and bounds map of the LWCF Boundary Area.

Acquisition projects must submit an *anticipated* LWCF Boundary Area map. All authorized projects will be required to submit a signed, accurate metes and bounds map prior to project closeout. Also identify the tax ID parcel and ensure the full acreage is accurately recorded on the map.

At a minimum, the LWCF Boundary Area map (for development or acquisition) should include:

- **Title** of Map.
- **Date** Map was prepared.
- **Scale** in feet.
- A **north compass point**.
- The **LWCF Boundary Area metes and bounds line** should be distinct from all other lines on the map.
 - The words “LWCF Boundary Area” should be written on the map with an arrow pointing to the line.
 - Boundary lines should be shown by dotted or bold lines and distinct from all other lines on the map.
- Match lines should be distinguishable and easily matched among parcels.
- Whenever possible, maps should include some **permanent locator**, natural landmarks, public roadways etc. to aid in determining boundaries in the field.
- The **number of acres** being placed under LWCF protection **must** be noted.
- Applicants should consider any existing or potential non-recreational uses of the park property that should be excluded (“carved out” and/or “setback”) from the LWCF Boundary Area protection. These areas should be clearly marked on the map and identified as being excluded from the LWCF Boundary Area.
- Applicants must consult with the Virginia Department of Transportation to determine if any planned road construction or improvement projects might impact the proposed LWCF Boundary Area. If any impacts are identified, a discussion is needed with DCR to determine possible adjustments to the LWCF Boundary Area to avoid creating future conversion of use issues.
- Any **easements** (utility, conservation, wetland, etc.) must be clearly shown on the map.
- Maps should be as high a **quality** as possible.
- DCR may need to print the electronic map in the future. The submitted map should be of high enough resolution to be legible on ledger size paper (11 x 17). If using this size paper compromises legibility please prepare the document for printing on a larger size.
- **Signed and dated** copies of the map are required. Signature should be of local representative authorized to submit the application request. Leave a space for DCR ASLO signature as well.

2. **Site Plan**

The Site Plan should be a plan of the existing *and* proposed site features that identifies the location of planned recreational developments, improvements, and other use features such as where the public will access the site, adjacent roads, parking, etc. Development projects

are expected to have more detailed site plans (site development plan) than acquisition projects (conceptual site plan). Also include the title of the project and a north arrow.

Development projects that are authorized will be required to present a final as-built certified site plan prior to project closeout.

3. Location Map

The location map should be a zoomed out aerial view that identifies the subject property(ies), and location of entrance to the site/outdoor recreation/park area. If applicable, note any other recreational parks and conserved lands in the general area.

VIII. Stewardship and Post-Completion Requirements

LWCF-assisted properties must be maintained to ensure safe public access. Properties shall be kept reasonably open, accessible, and in sanitary condition. For further details, review *Chapter 8 – Post-Completion and Stewardship* of the [NPS LWCF Manual](#).

LWCF Acknowledgment Sign

Permanent signs shall be installed on the property to acknowledge the federal-state-local partnership role in providing new high quality outdoor recreation areas and facilities and to facilitate continued awareness of the LWCF Act obligations by recipients/subrecipients as well as the public. A sign must be continuously maintained at the site. The cost of manufacturing the sign is the responsibility of the project sponsor.

Inspections

Inspections are regularly performed on LWCF assisted areas to monitor the project sponsor compliance with program and stewardship requirements. Recreation areas found in non-compliance will be notified in writing of the problems and a time frame for remediation. In cases where inspections discover conversions of use, DCR, in consultation with NPS, will provide direction to the subrecipient/project sponsor on the Conversion of Use process and a time frame for initiating it.

Conversions

LWCF assisted areas cannot be converted to any use other than public outdoor recreation use without the written approval of the Secretary of the Interior. This approval is contingent upon the conversion being found consistent with the state's SCORP and the project sponsor replacing the area to be converted with a new recreation area involving land of at least equal fair market value and reasonably equivalent recreational utility.

Project sponsors considering conversions of use **must coordinate with DCR**. The conversion process can take upwards of several years and NPS approval is not guaranteed.

Documentation must be compiled for both the proposed conversion and replacement property including UASFLA appraisals and NEPA correspondence. The project sponsor would be responsible for all costs of the studies as well as the replacement property. LWCF funding is not available for conversions.

IX. Environmental Review and Documentation Requirements

Projects selected by DCR will have until June 2024 to complete a series of required actions and documentation for DCR to submit their complete application package to NPS. Projects that have all required documentation at time of application will be prioritized for submission to NPS for their application review process in May 2024.

This includes demonstrating **compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the National Historic Preservation Act, Section 106**, through the completion of the necessary agency correspondence and reviews. See ***Detailed Environmental Review Procedures*** document available on the [DCR LWCF website](#) for general guidance on the review procedures. This process must be complete, and documentation of the process submitted to DCR as promptly as possible - preferably with the grant application. DCR will review all documentation and submit projects to NPS for review and compliance verification. Applications that are missing significant required documentation may not get the 'go ahead' from NPS to be submitted into Grants.gov in the summer 2024 window. In those instances, DCR may provide guidance to the project sponsor to encourage the completion of said documentation in time for the next, yet to be determined, Grants.gov window. Some projects may not be able to succeed in future authorization or may need to reapply.

Obtain Virginia Department of Historic Resources (DHR) review response as soon as possible. Note that NPS will complete required Federal Tribal consult for Section 106 requirements. Please provide correspondence, if any, already completed by the project sponsor with tribal contacts.

Potential project sponsors are strongly encouraged to begin the process of agency correspondence as soon as possible. It may be necessary to conduct cultural and/or ecological surveys at the request of corresponding agencies; if this is known early the project review and approval can be a smoother process. These actions may or may not be valid for reimbursement. Additional expenses incurred after project authorization would have to be filed as project amendments, which is the authority of NPS to approve.

Projects unable to complete NEPA review and other NPS submission requirements must be held until NPS announces and opens another grant acceptance period at an unknown future date but within a year of the end of DCR's grant round.

Projects also require a site inspection to be completed by DCR Recreation Grants staff. Please ensure the accurate contact information is provided so DCR can schedule the visit in a timely manner upon project selection. This site inspection will cover a view of the property, discussion of any eligibility concerns, and discussion of the process. If the property is under different ownership, please inform the property owner that this access will be needed in approximately early May.

Please reference the **LWCF Checklist for New Projects** posted on the [DCR LWCF website](#) for a checklist of documentation required before DCR-selected project can be submitted to NPS.

X. Available Funding

An estimated \$12 - 14 million in Federal funds are available during this grant round.

- Minimum grant award request is \$250,000. (total project cost \$500K)
- Maximum grant award request is open up to \$12 million.

Depending on the quantity and quality of applications received, awarded amounts may be less than full request. Committee will review and score applications. Higher scoring eligible projects will be prioritized for funding.

XI. Award Timeline

The anticipated timeline for the 2024 LWCF grant round is as follows:

- February 15, 2024 - DCR announces grant round; posts application guide and application documents
- Late February 2024 - DCR application webinar
- April 18, 2024 - Application submission deadline to DCR
- May 1, 2024 - Reviews/Scoring completed
- May 15, 2024 - DCR informs sponsors of projects selected for moving forward - DCR performs site visits to confirm suitability and discuss project details -
- June 1, 2024 - Selected applicants must be completed or entering projects to Department of Historic Resources and Department of Environmental Quality
- June 15, 2024 - DCR will be communicating with NPS Compliance and Awarding Officers to determine feasibility and eligibility of projects. Project sponsors will be receiving feedback.
- July 1, 2024 - DCR must officially submit eligible projects to the Federal authorization web platform
- September, 2024 - NPS will inform DCR of what projects are being awarded
- September 25, 2024 - Expected official project award date for selected and finalized projects (start date is determined by NPS)
- Project period date range is expected to be approximately October 1, 2024 through November 1, 2027 - all projects have three year grant periods

All projects will have a three (3) year project period from NPS authorized project period start date. For development projects, physical work on the project site must begin within one year of the NPS project start date. **It is essential that no purchases nor any physical construction begin on the project until there is written notification of NPS authorization**, otherwise those costs incurred may be ineligible for reimbursement.

XII. Application Procedures and Selection Process

The LWCF Act requires that project selections be made through an open project selection process. For full details on the OPSP in Virginia and to review the 2024 LWCF Scoring Criteria, view the **Virginia's Open Project Selection Process** document and LWCF 2024 Scoring Criteria documents found at <https://www.dcr.virginia.gov/recreational-planning/lwcf>.

Application Procedures

1. Read this guide in its entirety, referencing the NPS LWCF Manual, and other documents listed on page one as necessary.
2. Download the application forms from the DCR website at <https://www.dcr.virginia.gov/recreational-planning/lwcf>. The application consists of a checklist and multiple Microsoft Word documents.

Guidance on how to complete the forms and a checklist of additional documentation required are included as an appendix at the end of this manual.

If you are unable to download or use the application documents, please contact recreationgrants@dcr.virginia.gov or 804-508-8896 to obtain an alternative format ~.

3. Complete the application. All questions should be answered in the space available. Be clear and concise. Only include photographs, maps, and attachments where instructed to do so.
4. Submit the application as separate attachments or as a zipped file attached to one email (maximum email size 25 MB) to recreationgrants@dcr.virginia.gov by **April 18, 2024 at 4:00 pm**.

If your application documents will exceed 25 MB, please contact DCR at the email address above at least two business days prior to the submission deadline to discuss using an alternative submission method.

If you do not receive a reply acknowledging receipt of your electronic submission within one business day of submission, please contact DCR at the email or phone number listed above to ensure your application was received.

Selection Process for NPS Submittal and Award

1. Applications received by the deadline undergo a preliminary review by DCR Recreation Grants staff to verify application completeness and project eligibility.
2. All eligible and complete applications are scored by a panel of DCR and other state agency staff members, as a committee, in alignment with the 2024 LWCF Scoring Criteria.
3. Project sponsors of the highest scoring projects will be contacted to review program requirements and confirm their desire to proceed with NPS submittal.
4. DCR Recreation Grants staff will submit preliminary application documents to NPS for mandatory compliance preliminary review by May-June 2024 depending on completeness and program eligibility.
5. DCR Recreation Grants staff may perform a site inspection of the proposed project location.
6. DCR Recreation Grants staff will work with the project sponsor(s) to update and finalize documents for NPS final submittal as according to the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO).
NEPA and Section 106 review must be completed and submitted to NPS prior to June 12, 2024. DCR will submit these documents to NPS for review and confirmation of findings.

****Projects unable to complete NEPA and Section 106 review and other NPS submission requirements by June must be held until NPS announces and opens another open grant period at an unknown future date.****

7. NPS is the responsible entity to issue award authorizations for projects. **Do not proceed with acquisition or construction until project authorization date is confirmed and release of project grant award agreement.**
8. Once all project documents and forms are approved in GrantSolutions, NPS will release a Notice of Award (NOA) to DCR. DCR will then send a sub-agreement to the project sponsor. Once all signatories are obtained, the project can move forward.

XIII. Contact Information

For technical questions on the linked reference documents, application forms, and submission methods contact tarik.mansori@dcr.virginia.gov or call Recreation Grants Assistant Tarik Mansouri at 804-508-9521

For questions on applicant and project eligibility, eligible costs, and administration requirements contact kristal.mckelvey@dcr.virginia.gov or call Recreation Grants Manager Kristal McKelvey at 804-508-8896.

Virginia Land & Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) Application Checklist:

Please save all documents with Park Name to assist with filing.	
<input type="checkbox"/> 01 - DCR Application	Complete all fields
<input type="checkbox"/> 02 – Application & Revision Form	To be completed by applicant – serves as main application – N/A sections not needed
<input type="checkbox"/> 03 - Description & Notification Form (DNF)	Form from NPS – “Description & Notification Form”
<input type="checkbox"/> 04 - Location Map – general area	DCR provide guidance in 2024 Manual (see example)
<input type="checkbox"/> 05 - LWCF boundary area map	DCR provide guidance in 2024 Manual (see example – must be signed as proposed)
<input type="checkbox"/> 06 – Project Abstract	NPS Project Narrative
<input type="checkbox"/> 07 - Project Budget narrative	see example, must match categories in the SF 424A or SF 424C
<input type="checkbox"/> 08 – Budgetary Breakdown	See examples – ensure 50:50 match
<input type="checkbox"/> 09 – Park Project Cost Estimate	Summary of items – can show donated value as well.
<input type="checkbox"/> 10 – Project Timeline Construction or Acquisition Schedule	Show reasonable and detailed outline
<input type="checkbox"/> 11C – Site Development Plan – for Construction Projects	Specific park components that can be funded and completed w/in 3 years
<input type="checkbox"/> 11A – Appraisal Yellow Book Standard for Acquisitions	Also an appraisal review must be completed
Required Federal Forms – download and open in Adobe	
<input type="checkbox"/> SF-424 – all projects	NPS Forms “Budget Information for Projects”
<input type="checkbox"/> SF-424A – if acquisition project	NPS Forms “Budget Information for Non-Construction Projects”
<input type="checkbox"/> SF-424B – if acquisition project	NPS “Form Assurances – non-construction projects”
<input type="checkbox"/> SF-424 C – if construction project	NPS Form – “Budget Information – Construction Programs”
SF-424 D – if construction project	NPS Form – “Assurances for Construction Programs”
<input type="checkbox"/> ** SF-429 Cover sheet (for acquisition projects)	NPS form “Real Property Status Report”
<input type="checkbox"/> SF-429 Attachment B (for acquisition projects)	NPS form “Real Property Status Report B”

Required Documentation for NEPA and Section 106 – provide as separate PDF's

– include in description to agencies that the review is needed for 'Federal LWCF Funding'

Needed for all acquisition and or construction projects

12- Park - NEPA – USFWS iPAC report	Ran within grant round timeframe - PDF report from https://ipac.ecosphere.fws.gov/
13 - Park – DHR ePix Department of Historic Resources – ePIX search results – full area of potential effect and boundary – description of grading and/or depth of excavation planned	with proof of information sent to DHR and resulting response https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/federal-state-review/epix/ & https://epix.dhr.virginia.gov/
14 – Park – Department of Environmental Quality – Federal Consistency	https://www.deq.virginia.gov/our-programs/environmental-impact-review/document-submissions Email to EIR@DEQ.Virginia.gov and follow all identified contact review agencies as needed
15 – Park – VDWR Review Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources –	https://dwr.virginia.gov/wies/environmental-services/ - VAFWIS response
16 – Park – DCR Natural Heritage	https://vanhde.org/ - list yourself as a locality seeking LWCF funding
Additional documentation to consider as applicable:	Permitting information, letters of support, etc. Please keep to a minimum to maintain reasonably sized grant applications

All of the above documents will be needed by May 15, 2024 at the latest.

The more correspondence you complete during the open grant round, the more 'ready' your project will be for NPS review and potential Fall 2024 award.

Appendix B: Application Guidance

The following pages outline requirements and recommendations on how to complete the application forms and required attachments. This guidance follows the document order listed in the **LWCF-00-Application Checklist.docx** file. Templates are provided for some documents as indicated. Please name all files by adding “-(Project Sponsor Name)” to the end of the template name. For example, *LWCF-01-DCR Application-City of Richmond*.

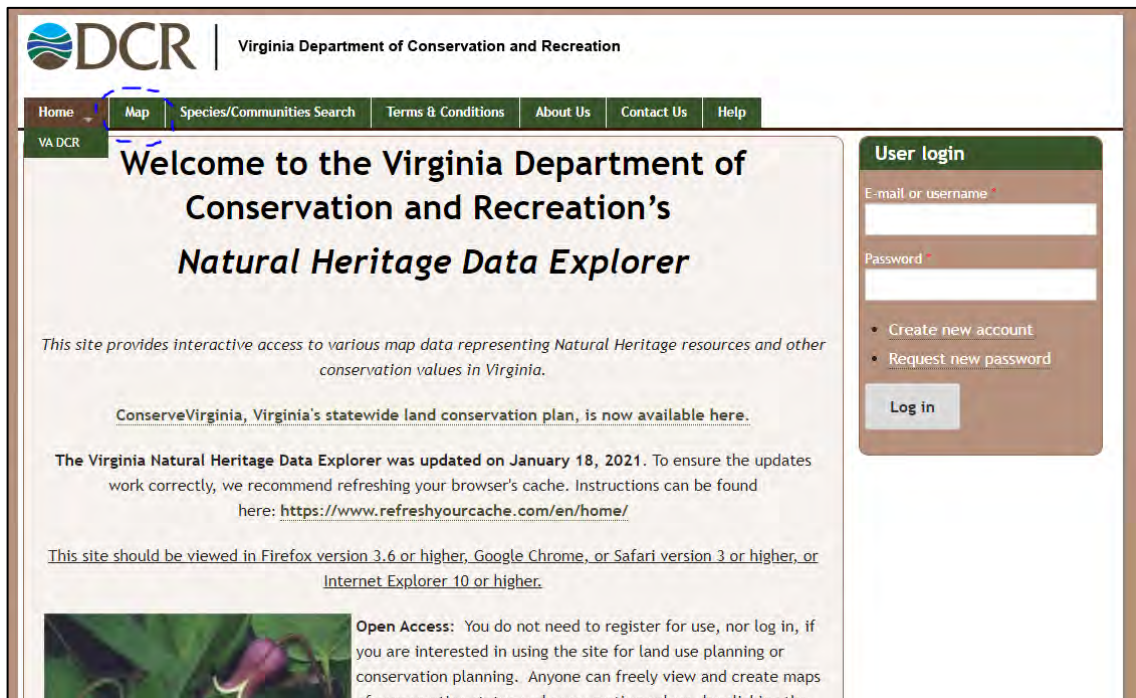
DCR Application Form

Template provided (LWCF-01-DCR Application.docx)

Question 26

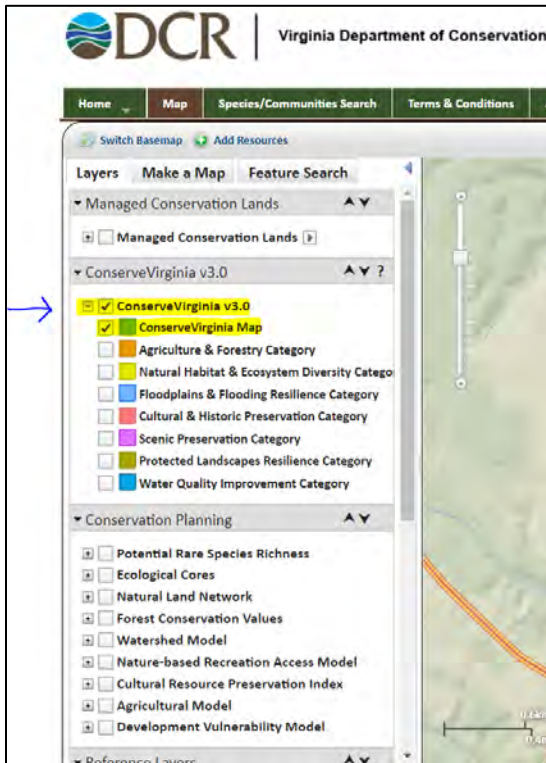
The ConserveVirginia map can be accessed through DCR’s Natural Heritage Data Explorer.

1. To access the Natural Heritage Data Explorer, visit: <https://vanhde.org/> and click on the “Map” tab. A separate browser tab will open. Please read and accept the Terms of Use.

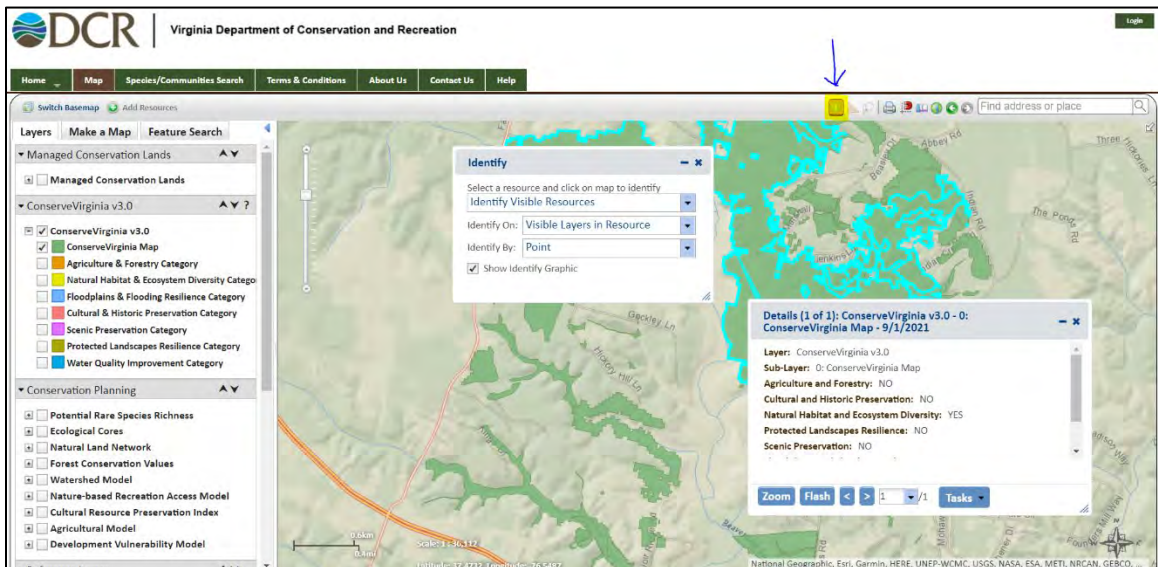


2. Navigate to your location by either using the map’s zoom feature, or entering an address into the box in the upper right side of the screen labeled “find address or place”

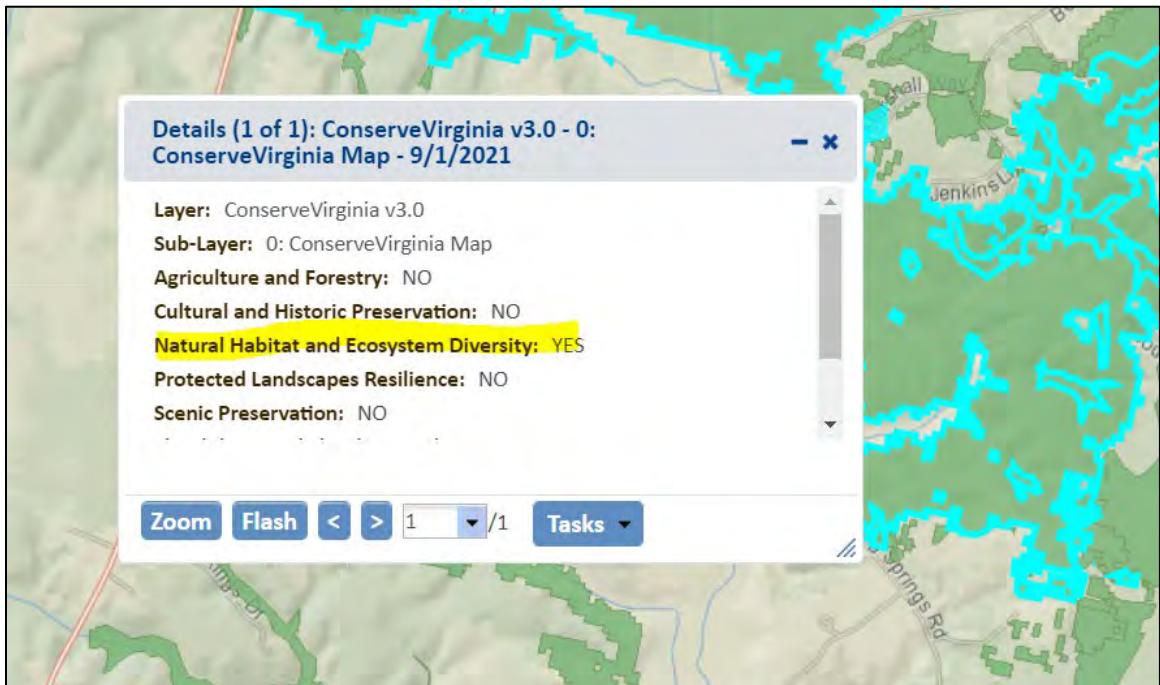
- Under the ConserveVirginia Category on the left side of the screen, check the box next to “ConserveVirginia v3.0”
- Expand that drop down and check the box next to “ConserveVirginia Map.”



- To find whether your parcel is within ConserveVirginia, click the “identify” icon in the top right of the map, next to the triangle and the magnifying glass.



- Two windows will pop up. Within the “Detail” window, it will say “Yes” next to any sub-layer/ category that is within ConserveVirginia. In this case, the identified location is within the Natural Habitat and Ecosystem Diversity layer.



7. Approximate the percentage of your subject parcel that is within the ConserveVirginia boundaries and indicate the percentage on the application.

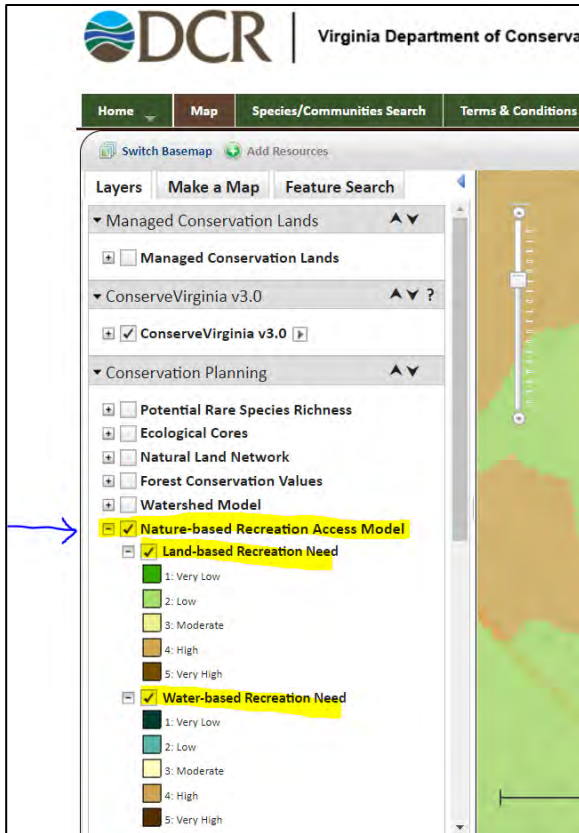
Questions 27 and 28

The project will be evaluated based on the demonstrated recreation need of its location based on the DCR Nature-based Recreation Access Model (2021) and the Trust for Public Lands ParkServe Model. Projects offering land-based recreation opportunities will be scored on whichever model demonstrates a greater need. Projects offering water-based recreation opportunities will be scored on the Nature-based Recreation Access Model’s water-based recreation need rating.

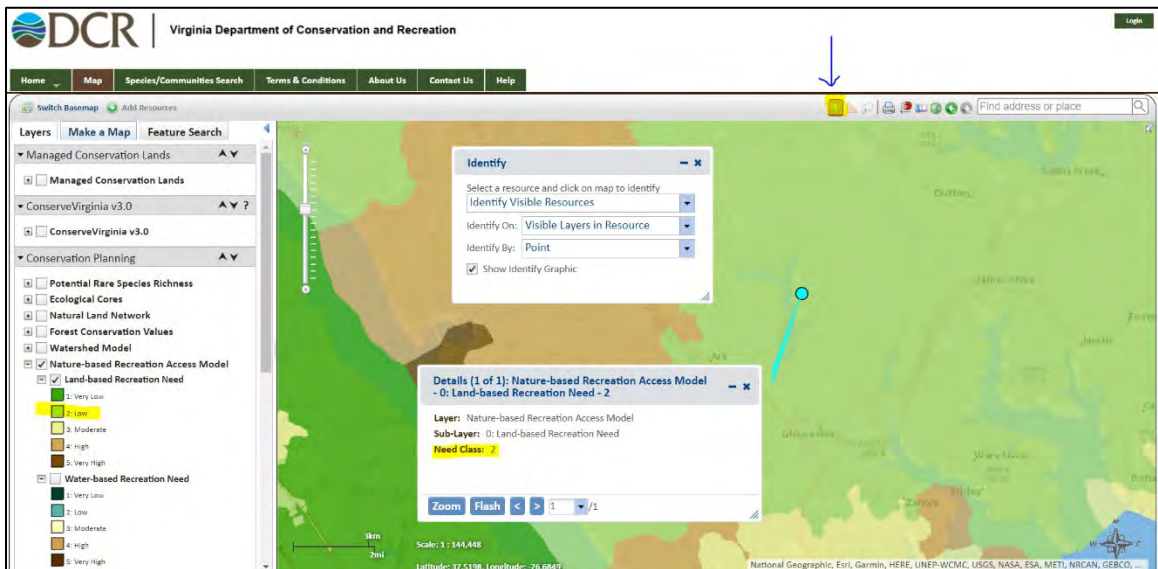
ParkServe can be found at: <https://www.tpl.org/parkserve>.

The Nature-based Recreation Access Model maps can be accessed through DCR’s Natural Heritage Data Explorer. Follow steps 1 and 2 outlined for Question 26 above to access the mapper. Once you have located your area on the map, follow these steps to view the Nature-based Recreation Access Model need rating:

1. Under the Conservation Planning Category on the left side of the screen, check the box next to “Nature-based Recreation Access Model”
2. Expand that drop down and check the box next to “Land-based Recreation Need” (Question 26) or “Water-based Recreation Need” (Question 27)



- To find the score you have selected, click the “identify” icon in the top right of the map, next to the triangle and the magnifying glass.



- Two windows will pop up. Within the “Details” window, the “Need Class” will be listed. This corresponds to one of the five need classes listed in the legend.

Question 31

If you answer “yes” to this question, please explain and provide a website address to verify data source or attach source documents to your application. Due to discrepancies in data collection and reporting, there are no one-stop locations to access this data for the entire state. Some links are provided below, but they may not include data for your community. If you can provide a different reputable source indicating the prevalence of one of the diseases listed, it will be accepted. While there are most likely overlaps between the prevalence rates of these diseases, points will be awarded for this item as long as the prevalence of one of the diseases is greater than the state-wide average. The following sources may provide data for your community:

- Cancer data by health district <https://www.vdh.virginia.gov/data/cancer-2/>.
- CDC Data Explorer <https://ephtracking.cdc.gov/DataExplorer/>
- VDH Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance Survey <https://www.vdh.virginia.gov/brfss/data/>.
- VDH data website <https://www.vdh.virginia.gov/healthy-communities/data/>

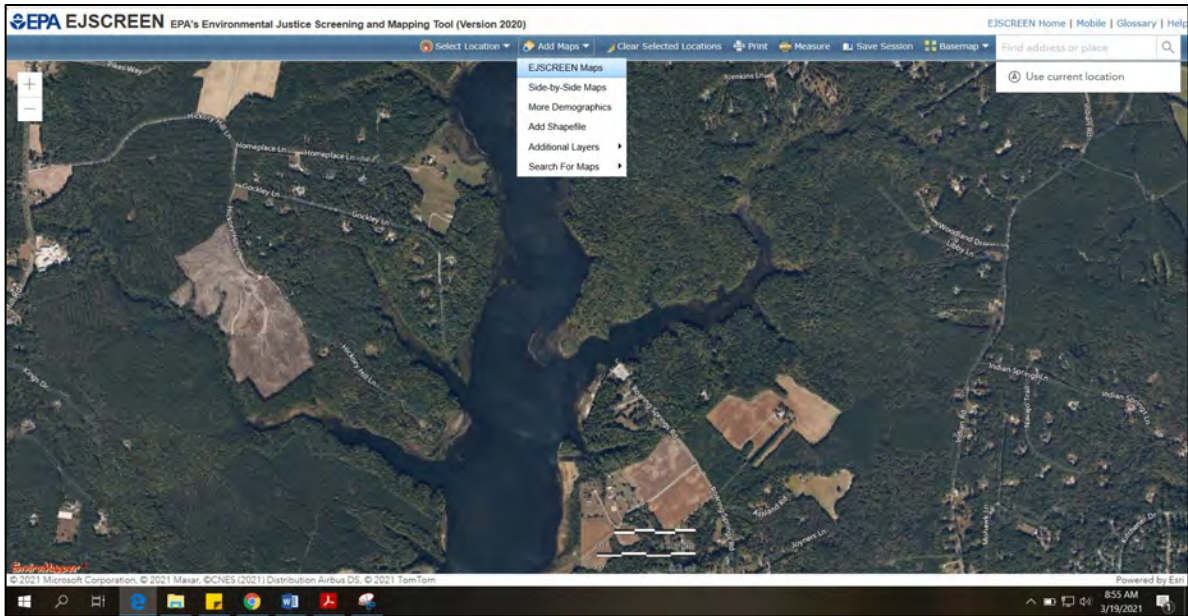
Question 32

The Social Vulnerability Index created by the Virginia Institute of Marine Sciences may be used to identify underserved areas of the state: http://cmap2.vims.edu/SocialVulnerability/SocioVul_SS.html. Please check the “Social Vulnerability Index Score” option. Data from other sources will also be considered for this criterion if the applicant provides the source reference.

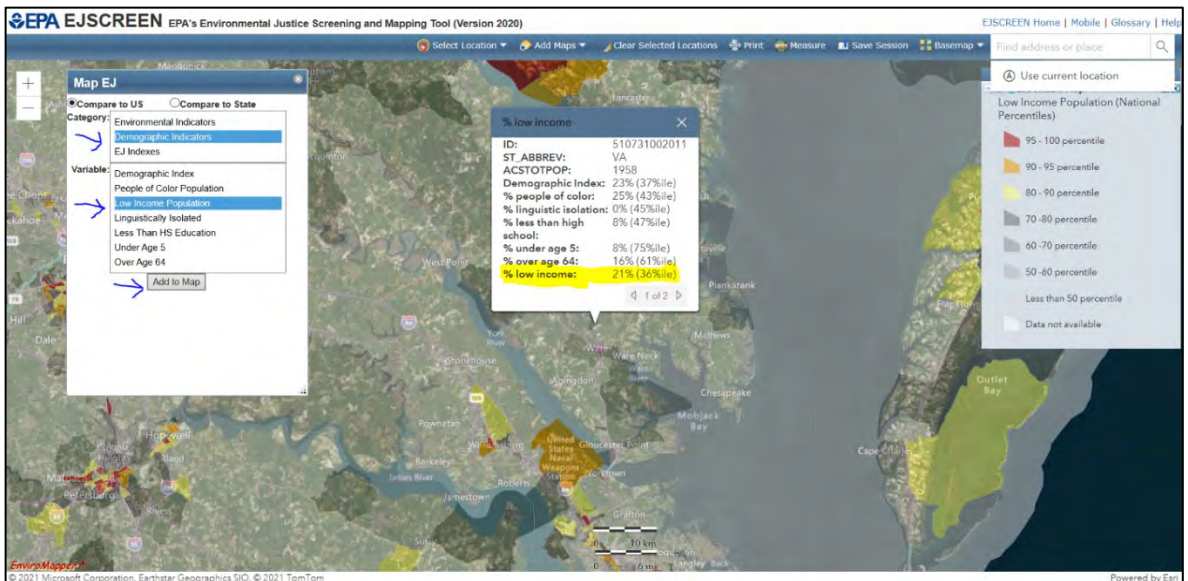
Question 33

One resource that can be used to identify the percentage of local population considered low income is the Environmental Protection Agency’s (EPA) Environmental Justice Screening and Mapping Tool (EJSCREEN) found at <https://ejscreen.epa.gov/mapper/>. If you use other sources, please provide a website link, if available, or attach source documents to your application. To use the EJSCREEN tool:

1. Navigate to your trail location using either the zoom tools or the “Find address or place” search bar in the top right corner of the screen. Note you can adjust the basemap by clicking on the “Basemap” button to the left of the search bar.
2. Click “Add Maps” and then select “EJSCREEN Maps” from the drop-down menu.



3. A pop-up window will appear. Note you can select either “Compare to US” or “Compare to State.” Either value will be accepted.
4. In the Category box, select “Demographic Indicators.” In the Variable box, select “Low Income Population” and then click “Add to Map.”
5. Click on the location of your trail. A second pop up labeled “% low income” will appear. Highlighted in the screen capture below shows that 21% of residents in the area of this trail are considered low income.



Question 35

Historically underrepresented groups could include, but are not limited to: people with disabilities, people of color, indigenous peoples and tribes, LGBTQ people,

immigrants, youth organizations or representatives, senior organizations or representatives, neighborhood groups.

Question 38

DCR has not verified all past projects on the map, but the Trust for Public Land's Land and Water Conservation Fund Past Project Mapper can be used to identify nearby LWCF properties if local records are not available (be sure to zoom in):

<https://lwcf.tplgis.org/mappast/>.

Question 39

Review the Environmental Review and Public Comment Procedures guidance document available at <https://www.dcr.virginia.gov/recreational-planning/lwcf> for overview of agency correspondence required.

Appendix B: Accessibility Resources

All facilities developed with assistance from the Fund must be designed in conformance with the appropriate current design standards for the Architectural Barriers Act of 1968 (Public Law 90-480); Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended; and the Americans with Disabilities Act.

The following resources may aid entities in planning for inclusive outdoor recreation experiences and understanding legal obligations. As you plan your project, consider how your entity will provide equitable experiences for all users, including people with mobility, sensory, cognitive, and mental health disabilities.

2010 ADA Standards for Accessible Design <https://www.access-board.gov/ada/>

Full text of the technical standards that apply to state and local governments, non-profits, and businesses.

ABA Accessibility Standards <https://www.access-board.gov/aba/>

Full text of the technical standards that apply to federal government agencies and some recipients of federal funds.

U.S. Access Board Guide to the ABA Accessibility Standards (Outdoor)

<https://www.access-board.gov/aba/guides/chapter-10-outdoor/>

Illustrated guide to the technical requirements of the ABA Outdoor Developed Area standards, which include trails, viewing areas, picnic areas and camping areas.

U.S. Forest Service Accessibility Resources Website

<https://www.fs.usda.gov/managing-land/national-forests-grasslands/accessibility/resources>

Contains links to numerous documents, including the Forest Service Trail Accessibility Guidelines, and other guides, summaries, and best practices.

American Trails Accessible Trail Resources Library

<https://www.americantrails.org/resources/query/?trails%5B%5D=665>

Summary collection of accessible land and water trail articles, webinars, guides, bulletins from a variety of sources.

AccessibilityOnline Webinar Archives

<https://www.accessibilityonline.org/ao/archives/>

Archive of recorded webinars presented by the U.S. Access Board on ADA and ABA standards, including Recreation Facilities and Outdoor Developed Areas.

Massachusetts Audubon Accessible Trails Manual

<https://www.massaudubon.org/get-outdoors/accessibility/accessible-projects-and-partners/accessible-trails-manual>

Summary and recommendations from Mass Audubon detailing their experiences in creating multisensory and inclusive trail environments.

Trails for All People: Guidance for Accessibility and Inclusive Design

<https://conservationtools.org/guides/115>

Guide from WeConservePA with overview of legal requirements and summary of best practices.