

COUNTY FOREST OPPORTUNITIES IN THE RECREATIONAL GRANT WORLD

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County Forests and the Grant World



- Recent Stewardship Revisions
- Local Units of Government Program
- Non-Profit Conservation Organization Program
- Project Match
- Which Program Do I Use
- Federal Land & Water Conservation Fund Program
- Federal Recreational Trails Act Program

Stewardship Grant Revisions

- Local Units of Government Program was reduced by \$2 million. New allocation is \$6 million per fiscal year.
- Activity Signage
- Print Directory and Project Activities Survey
- Municipal Notification Letters
- Grant awards over \$250,000 are reviewed by the Joint Committee on Finance
- Unused funds lapsed at the end of fiscal year (actually May 15)
- Program Restructuring



Activity Signage

- Two Different Signs
- All Stewardship projects must have the funding sign.
- Acquisition projects must have an activity sign indicating prohibited or allowed activities.
- Funding can be acknowledge in the activity sign or other funding acknowledgement signs. Contact DNR for logo.



Print Directory

- By December 21, 2013, the Department must provide a print directory of all lands acquired with Stewardship funding.
- Directory will be four townships per page and will show Stewardship grant properties
- Information on how to order will be available on the DNR's website.
- Individual pages and county units can be printed from your computer.





Grant Survey



- The Department is required to provide a listing of all lands acquired with Stewardship before October 27, 2007 where public access has been prohibited or restricted and why.
- Information was never gathered previously so a concentrated electronic survey will be coming soon to sponsors.
- Sponsors will need to provide recreational activities information by parcel for grant projects.
- For the 5 nature-based outdoor activities information about prohibitions and restrictions will be requested.
- By November 30, we will need surveys completed for grants before October 27, 2007. Listing is also due December 21, 2013.
- Information will be also gathered about development projects.
- Good news – this is the first step towards electronic applications and the LWCF compliance monitoring system.



Municipal Notification Letters

- Department is required by law to provide notification to local municipalities of pending land acquisitions with Stewardship funding.
- Provides local units with 30 days to respond with a non-binding resolution for or against the proposed project.
- Law doesn't exclude the sponsor – so letters are also sent to county board chair. Your board doesn't have to do anything since we have a resolution on file.
- Department is to considered the resolution in making their final decision.

Grant Awards Over \$250,000

- Grant awards over \$250,000 are required by law to be reviewed by the Joint Committee on Finance
- Project information is available to the JFC for 14 business days.
- Public has the ability to comment on project. We do not send the support letters submitted with the application.
- If no hearing is requested, the grant contract will be issued.
- If a hearing is requested, a grant contract will only be issued after approval is given.
- Will add approximately 3-4 weeks to the timeline.



Lapsing Unused Funds



- Stewardship funds lapse at the end of each fiscal year.
- Financial deadlines will require that grant contracts and agreements be returned to regional staff by May 15. We have limited availability to go beyond this date.
- If a project comes in under cost and the project is closed out. The funds do not roll back into the Stewardship allocation. We are unable to reuse those funds on another project.
- Cost estimates with applications should be as accurate as possible.
- Be prepared with listing of eligible items that could be amended into a project it comes in under the cost estimate.

Program Restructuring

- Pam Foster-Felt, NCO Stewardship Grant Manager
- Lavane Hessler, LUG Stewardship Grant Manager
- July 1, 2013 became part of the Bureau of Facilities and Lands in the Division of Land. We are located on 6th floor of GEF 2 instead of 2nd floor.
- Regional staff are still part of the Bureau of Community Assistance in the Division of Customer and Employee Services
- Should be no changes to the working relationship between the county, regional staff, or grant managers.





LOCAL UNITS OF GOVERNMENT GRANTS

LUG Stewardship Allocation

- Local Units of Government Allocation is \$6 million per fiscal year
 - Reduced in this past budget from \$8 million
- FY 2014 applications
 - 102 Applications
 - Totaled \$18.8 million
 - 25 applications will receive funding
- Additional approvals
 - 8 applications will need JFC approval
 - 8 applications will need Natural Resources Board approval for a prohibition due to public safety for hunting and/or trapping.



Local Units Subprograms

- Acquisition and Development of Local Parks
 - 50% of available funding
 - Acquisition and Development projects
- Urban Rivers
 - 20% of available funding
 - Acquisition and Development projects
- Urban Greenspace
 - 20% of available funding
 - Acquisition
 - Community Gardens
- Acquisition of Development Rights
 - 10% of available funding
 - Conservation Easements
- \$50,000 set aside for second appraisals and reviews until April 1

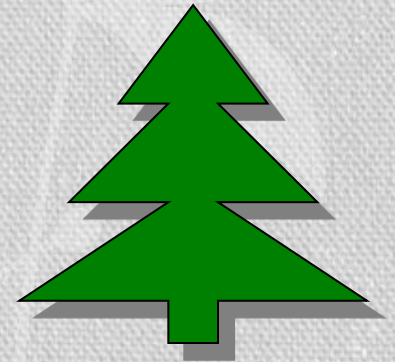




NCO GRANTS

Non-Profit Conservation Organizations

- Non-Profit Conservation Organizations (NCO) are eligible for land acquisition grants under the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program.
- \$12 million per fiscal year
- There are mainly four subprograms:
 - Natural Area – property shall qualify for dedication as a state natural area
 - Habitat Areas – property to protect, enhance, or restore wildlife habitat
 - State Trails – property for state trails (defined list)
 - Stream Bank Protection – property on stream corridors and within the stream’s watershed (priority listing)
 - Also eligible for the Local Units of Government programs.
- Each subprogram has very specific grant requirements.
- Partnerships between NCO’s and County Forests occur – land will transfer to the County Forest after NCO closes on property
- Beware! The program requirements may not coincide with your interests or management plans



NCO Reverted Funds

- New in 2013-15 State Budget
- If the NCO program leaves funding on the table at the end of a fiscal year (June 30), the remaining funds are reallocated to the County Forest Stewardship Subprogram in the following fiscal year.
- The funds will be administered according to the County Forest Stewardship guidelines.
- First reallocation will occur in the State Fiscal Year 2015
- Available funding won't be known to early July 2014
 - Approximately \$4 million in fiscal year 2013
- Follow your County Forest Stewardship applications guidelines.





LEVERAGING FUNDING

Match Requirements

- Sponsor match is the portion of the acquisition or development cost which is not funded by the state.
- Sources of match:
 - Cash from sponsor
 - Funds generated by local or federal governments
 - Grants or contributions from foundations, businesses, private individuals or non-profit organizations
 - Property contributions from a third party if the contribution is made within 3 years of the acquisition of the property and is considered by the Department to be eligible for the same program
 - Property acquired within 3 years of the acquisition by the sponsor if not purchased with state funds
 - Property value donated by property owner
 - County forest loan program



Donations



- The programs have different rules concerning land donations.
- Three years to use donated value
- NCO and LUG have a 50% maximum limit of certified value
 - LUGs – up to the amount needed for the project (not above purchase price)
 - NCO's can bank value for another purchase
- County Forest has 100% maximum limit of certified value within the first year and 50% for the second and third years
- If land was used as match to another grant program, no long eligible
- If property is encumber with a restriction, then value set with restriction
- Land donations can be used for match on development projects
- Also donated labor, supplies and materials – limited to a maximum of 50% of the project



WHAT PROGRAM
DO I USE?

How Do I Choose?



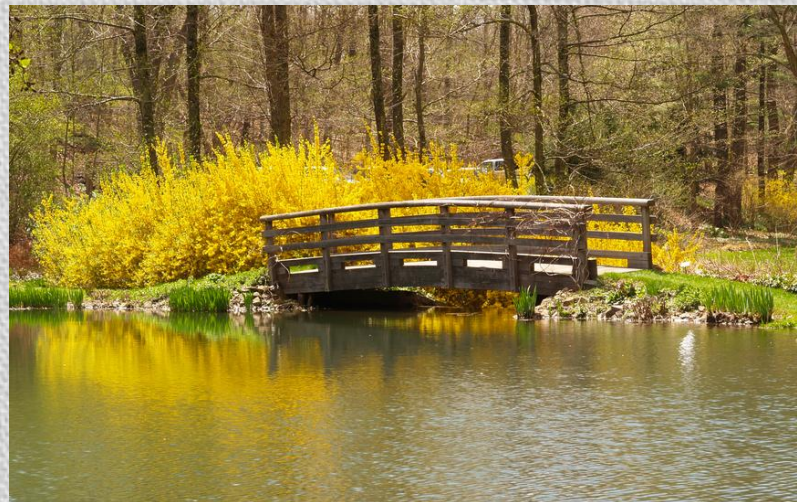
- What is the primary purpose of the project?
 - Timber Management
 - Recreational
 - Natural Area
- Is the project development, acquisition, or an easement?
- What are the program requirements?
- Does your plans for the property correlate with the program requirements?
- What are the eligibility requirements?
- How does it rate?
- What is the funding level, caps, match requirements, etc.?
- Time frame

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FEDERAL LAND & WATER CONSERVATION FUND PROGRAM

Land & Water Conservation Fund - LWCF

- Since 1965 Wisconsin has participated in the state side of the Land and Water Conservation Fund.
- Almost 1900 grants have been awarded to the State of Wisconsin worth approximately \$76 million.
- Funds are split 50% to state properties and 50% local units of government.
- LWCF restrictions & requirements are permanent.
- Administered for the Department of Interior by the National Park Service.
- Department of Natural Resources administers the program for the State of Wisconsin.



County Forest Role in LWCF

- Approximately \$350,000 per year allocated to local projects in WI
 - Grants can include active recreation components
 - Use the Stewardship LUG application form
- Every 5 years compliance inspections must be completed
 - Self Inspection Process – Regional Staff will send forms
 - Complete inspection and return it
- Conversions
 - When it can be documented that there are no other alternatives to converting a LWCF protected site to another non-public outdoor recreational use.



Legal Basis



Section 6(f) (3) “No property acquired or developed with assistance under this section shall, without the approval of the Secretary, be converted to other than public outdoor recreation uses. The Secretary shall approve such conversion only if he finds it to be in accord with the then existing comprehensive statewide outdoor recreation plan and only upon such conditions as he deems necessary to assure the substitution of other recreation properties of at least equal fair market value and of reasonably equivalent usefulness and location.”

Conversions

- A request and detailed justification is made and subsequently to the National Park Service (NPS) for approval prior to implementing the conversion.
- The LWCF program requires that the property being converted be replaced with property of at least equal value, size, and recreational utility to the public.
- This concept is based on the LWCF Act's emphasis on protecting taxpayers investments in the "national recreation estate" and ensuring that the outdoor recreation land base funded by grants under the program is not decreased.
- County Forest withdrawal must be completed first
- Cell or public safety communication towers; transmission upgrades expanding easement area; flood control structures are all conversions.



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FEDERAL
RECREATIONAL
TRAILS ACT PROGRAM



Trails



- Federal program through Federal Highway Administration and WI Department of Transportation with DNR administering the program
- Funding is split between state and local projects
- Funding allocation for local projects on a three year cycle
 - FY 2014 – maximum of \$45,000 cap per grant project
 - FY 2015 – maximum of \$45,000 cap per grant project
 - FY 2016 – 2/3 of funding will have a cap of \$200,000 and 1/3 will have a cap of \$45,000 per grant project
- Phase projects – viable trail project – can it “stand alone”
- If a project comes in the next year after receiving the cap and it can’t be seen as a different phase then it will not get funding from RTA.
- May receive remaining funds up to 50% of the grant request from Stewardship but this is not guaranteed. Funding is dependent on how it ranked under the Stewardship rating system.

Questions ?