

3.5 Application Process

Applicants who submit a complete and accurate application that clearly meets the expectations set forth in the pre-application will receive an invitation to complete a full application. The application can be completed online at www.wlf.louisiana.gov/page/louisiana-outdoors-forever.

Application:

The application serves as a mechanism in gathering more detailed project elements, detailed surveys and reviews, and items that only apply to applicants who are invited to submit a full application.

Items submitted in the pre-application may not be revised, updated or amended, due to the competitive nature of the program. If an item must be revised, the TAB will determine if a Project Agreement Amendment or a resubmission of a new pre-application would be required.

All applications shall contain the following items.

- **Responses to each of the evaluation criteria** – Applicants should provide further details on how the proposed project meets the evaluation criteria.
- **Application Cover Letter** – This official letter is the instrument denoting support and authority to submit an application, signed by a ranking authorizing representative of the entity (Board Chairperson, Commissioner, Mayor, etc.). It must be on official letterhead.
- **Detailed Project Budget Worksheet** – This budget shall include all items depicted in the pre-application stage, although a higher level of detail is required. It should show units of measure/piece count estimates, cost per unit, proper names of materials, etc.
- **Project Description** – This is a detailed narrative describing the entire scope of the project, including location vicinity map, acreage, purpose, need, and all Louisiana Outdoors Forever funded project elements. Applicants should focus on describing the elements and activities receiving funding, rather than convincing narrative content. Applicants should also describe the ability of the project to be scaled up or down.
- **Project Implementation Schedule** – A schedule outlining the timeline and occurrence of each major project milestone and limited to a project period.
- **Landowner Letter of Support** – A letter by willing seller or contract of sale will be accepted in lieu of the Landowner Letter of Support.

Applications shall contain the following items if applicable.

- **Photos and Photo Key Map** - Applicants should submit various photos of the key components of the project receiving funding. If photos supplied were taken on the project site, a map of the project site must be included showing the relative location of each photograph taken. Each location is to be numbered corresponding to the photograph's number, and an arrow pointing in the direction of viewing from the photographer's perspective. No more than 2 photos per page are to be uploaded to the online application.

- **Project Plans** – Proposed project plans should be included when relevant.

Applications will be scored and ranked based on the above required and if applicable documents.

If one or more of the following items are noted as needed in the application submission or is specifically requested by the TAB as part of their evaluation process and if that project is selected by the PSB, the applicant will receive a pre-approval letter and will have one calendar year to provide these items:

- **Environmental Review Documents** –The environmental review ensures that any impact upon any assisted site is in accordance with State and Federal regulations.
- **Site Engineering Plans (if engineering is a part of the proposed project)** - Site engineering plans depicting locations of elements within the site and distances to scale, and uploaded to the application where requested, will be required for building or site development projects.
- **Evidence of Property Ownership** – The acquisitive deed whereby the landowner acquired ownership of the property on which the project will take place, and evidence of payment of ad valorem taxes for the past three years. Legal title opinion preferred.
- **Full Narrative Appraisal** – A full narrative appraisal prepared by a licensed MAI appraiser (if applicable, i.e. projects which include an acquisition of real property interests).
- **Partnership Commitment** – Any application that is part of another grant award that has not been received at the time of application submission will receive a pre-approval letter if their projected is approved by the PSB until they produce the approved grant agreement.

Appendix A

Full Application Scoring Criteria

Act 714 of the 2022 Regular Session stipulates that projects shall be evaluated by the Technical Advisory Board and selected by the Project Selection Board using defined criteria and scoring based on a clear, defensible, science-based process. Such rules shall include procedures for applying to the program and detailed criteria and scoring to be used by the boards in their evaluation and selection of projects for funding

All applications will be reviewed in light of the questions below.
Total possible points = 100

Question 1 – Project Needs and Benefits

Max 50 points

Does this project provide specific and clearly identified needs and benefits? Project Benefits considered can include the following:

A. Outdoor recreational opportunity

Criteria Question Does this project provide new or enhanced recreational access to parks/green space/natural environment (for fishing, hiking, hunting, canoeing, or other?)

Criteria Details Applicant should list any new or enhanced recreational access provided by this project.

Criteria Question Will this project provide outdoor nature-based recreational opportunities?

Criteria Details Applicant must list all nature-based outdoor recreation opportunities provided by the acquisition or development of this property.

B. Cultural and Historical Value

Criteria Question Does this project provide conservation on or adjacent to a historical site or site of cultural significance?

Criteria Details Applicant must describe how the project provides conservation on or near the historical site or site of cultural significance.

Criteria Question Does this project include the acquisition or stewardship of land with a cultural or historical value?

Criteria Details Applicant must demonstrate how the property has local, regional or state-wide cultural and/or historical value and describe how this project adds to or enriches that value.

C. Water Quality

Criteria Question Does this project provide improvement of impaired water quality or protection of water quality in healthy waters that meet or exceed water quality standards, including drinking water supplies?

Criteria Details Applicant should describe how the project provides improvement of water quality or protection.

D. Ecological Value

- Criteria Question Does this project provide enhancement or conservation of important natural areas, including fish and wildlife habitat and corridors?
- Criteria Details Applicant must describe how the project provides enhancement or conservation of important natural areas.
- Criteria Question Does the project provide conservation of soil, water, or other natural resources on working lands?
- Criteria Details Applicant must demonstrate how the project provides conservation of soil, water, or other natural resources related to working lands.
- Criteria Question Does this project include the acquisition or stewardship of land with a significant ecological, conservation, restoration, or natural resource sustainability value?
- Criteria Details Applicant must demonstrate the significant ecological value of the project including, but not limited to, native plant and animal species of a conservation concern; and/or the critical importance of the habitat, particularly those that include a stream buffer.

E. Contiguous

- Criteria Question Is the proposed project contiguous with other conservation properties (including but not limited to local, state or federal parks and forests, conservation easements, scenic rivers or other important properties)?
- Criteria Details Applicants project should demonstrate that the project is contiguous with other conservation properties.

F. Future Benefits

- Criteria Question Does this project satisfy specific and clearly identified benefits into the future and how they meet the desired project category?
- Criteria Details Describe how elements within your proposal meet a project category from the program. Clearly identify your project's anticipated lifespan and how it will yield benefits for Louisiana into the future.

G. Stewardship

- Criteria Question Will this project promote the stewardship of natural resources?
- Criteria Details Applicant must demonstrate how this project will promote effective conservation and sustainable practices, protect the scenic or unique natural features present and visibility of such, assist the property in remaining relevant to the community, and encourage visitation and participation by providing a safe recreational experience for future generations.

Question 2 – Partnerships

Max 10 points

Criteria Question Is there a measurable value added to this project through cooperation with external partners?

Criteria Details Applicant must describe the contribution of all partnerships and provide documentation of close participation of all entities. Applicant must identify the scope and participation level of each entity, including donations, cash or materials, volunteer/staff hours or professional services provided.

Required Documents: Letters of commitment must be uploaded for each partnership. Letters of commitment must specify the value of each partnership.

Note: Any cash, donations, etc. detailed in commitment letters must be included in the Project Budget Worksheet.

Question 3 – Underserved Area or Area of Designated Need

Max 10 points

Criteria Question Does this project satisfy specific and clearly identified needs within an underserved area or area of designated need?

Criteria Details The application should describe if and how the project will benefit an underserved area or area of designated need. A resource for applicants to identify an underserved area or area of designated need is the White House's Justice 40 website (<https://www.whitehouse.gov/environmentaljustice/justice40/>). This website is not the sole determinant of underserved areas or areas of designated need.

Question 4 – Funding or Matching Funds

Max 10 points

Criteria Question What amount or percentage of matching funds or in-kind match will be provided?

Question Details Applicant must identify the amount or percentage of matching funds or in-kind match that they will provide, including the source of funds.

All matching funds or in-kind match must be included and highlighted as such in the Project Budget Worksheet. Written documentation of monetary investments or in-kind match must be provided in the form of letters of contribution.

Question 5 – Local, State, Regional, or Federal Plans

Max 5 points

Criteria Question Does this project coincide with, build upon or add value to any existing local, state, regional, or federal plan?

Criteria Details Applicant must cite the relevant local, state, regional, or federal plan and the project's alignment to the plan.

Question 6 – Timely Completion

Max 5 points

Criteria Question What is the estimated schedule for completion?

Criteria Details Any application that is postured to be ready to begin may be assigned points for having a high likelihood of timely completion.

Question 7 – Economic Development/Benefits

Max 5 points

Criteria Question Will this project create opportunities to enhance the local, regional and/or statewide economy?

Criteria Details Applicant must demonstrate how the project will benefit the local, regional, and/or statewide economy. The applicant may provide the following to show the positive impact of this project beyond the local or host community: current comprehensive plan; parish or local stakeholder work plans; resource inventory; NRI data; current recreation master plan; current county or regional master plan; current trail system plan; State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan; current capital improvements plan, current regional water plan and/or land use management plan; recorded public hearing minutes; supporting documentation from the Chamber of Commerce; letters from local business(es) or economic development organizations; etc.

The information provided should describe job creation, ecosystem services, recreational use income, enhancements to rural economies as quantified by agricultural economics, and other related economic benefits expected to result from this project, if applicable.

Note: The purpose of this question is to advance local, regional, or statewide significant economic impacts, in order to continue to sustain the local, regional, or state-wide economic base, as well as diversify those respective drivers. Applicants may submit local, regional, or statewide planning documents as proof.

Question 8 – Maintenance

Max 5 points

Criteria Question What is the maintenance and management plan for the project?

Criteria Details Describe the maintenance and management plan in place for the project, or how a plan will be developed before project completion. The information provided should showcase sustainability through time. Maintenance plans may include but are not limited to RMS level or other site specific conservation plans.

Criteria Question Do you have a plan and budget to maintain, manage, and secure this property for multiple years of commitment beyond the project completion date?

Criteria Details Applicant must provide an approved applicable maintenance, management, and security plan that shows multi-year of commitment beyond the project completion date. These commitments must address monetary support as well as address a credible timeline.

Scoring Criteria	Points
Project Needs and Benefits	50
Partnerships	10
Underserved Areas or Areas of Designated Need	10
Funding or Matching Funds	10
Local, State, Regional, or Federal Plans	5
Timely Completion	5
Economic Development/Benefits	5

Maintenance	5
Total	100