



FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

FOR

OUTDOOR RECREATION and CONSERVATION PROJECTS

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GA DNR Grants Unit

State and Federal Grant Opportunities

Georgia Outdoor
Stewardship Program



Recreational Trails
Program



Land & Water
Conservation Fund



Grant Programs Similarities



▶ ALL applicants must complete an online Pre-application and provide project description, project budget, preliminary site plan, and other required documentation.

▶ Pre-application is competitive.

▶ ALL programs require matching funds.

▶ Selected projects will be invited to Second-level application.

▶ ALL projects must be completed within a two-year period beginning on the date the Project Agreement is fully executed.

▶ ALL programs operate on a reimbursement basis.



RTP

- ❑ No minimum funding amount
- ❑ **Maximum** funding: \$200,000
- ❑ Minimum match: 20% of total project cost
- ❑ Examples of competitive project types:
 - Trail construction
 - Water Trails: Canoe/kayak launch construction
 - Rehabilitation of existing trails
 - Trailhead facilities
 - Trail Education
 - (Everything Trails-related)



GOSP

- ❑ **Minimum** funding: \$500,000
- ❑ **Maximum** funding \$3,000,000
- ❑ Minimum match: 25% of total project cost
- ❑ Examples of competitive project types:
 - Critical habitat acquisition
 - Reforestation
 - Riparian zone restoration
 - Reservoir enhancements
 - Invasive species removal
 - Camp site construction
 - Canoe/kayak launch
 - Fishing Pier
 - Trail systems



LWCF

- ❑ **Minimum** funding: \$25,000
- ❑ **Maximum** funding: \$750,000
- ❑ Minimum match: 50% of total project cost
- ❑ Examples of competitive project types:
 - Baseball/Softball/Soccer field construction
 - Restroom additions at existing parks
 - Splash pads
 - Playgrounds
 - Ball field parking lots /fencing/lighting
 - Picnic areas





Georgia Outdoor Stewardship Program (GOSP)



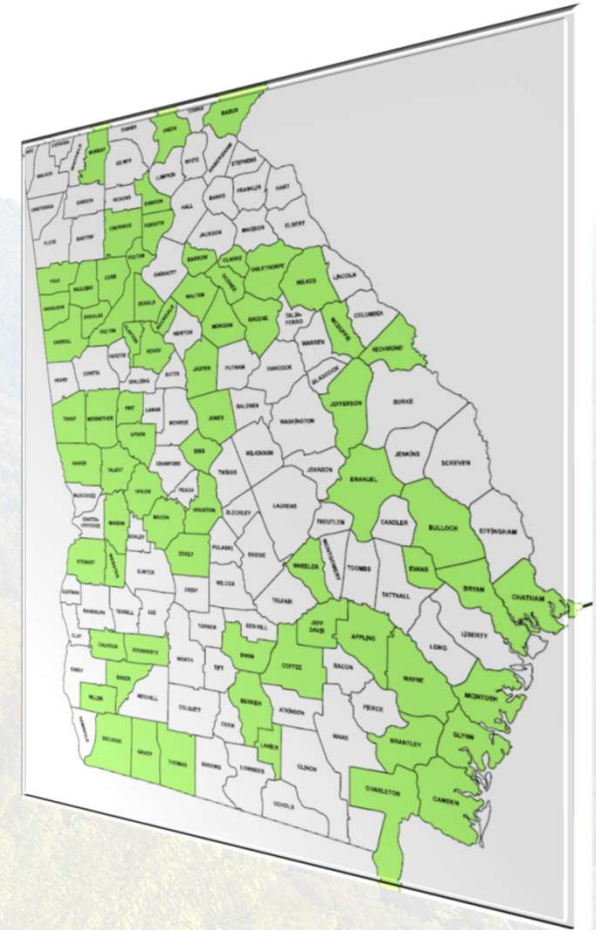
Georgia Outdoor Stewardship Program (GOSP)

Funded by moneys received by the state from the sales and use tax collected by outdoor recreation equipment establishments.

Supports stewardship of state parks, state lands, wildlife management areas, local parks & trails; and protects critical conservation land.

Enacted in 2019 – Seven successful funding cycles:

- ❑ 88 projects funded
- ❑ 69 counties impacted
- ❑ \$175.6 M funds allocated
- ❑ 69,000 acres acquired



Who Can Apply?

Qualified Local Governments

Constituted Recreation Authorities

State Agencies

Nongovernmental Entities *

* Nongovernmental Entities must be registered with the Secretary of State and primarily focused on the protection and conservation of land and natural resources.

Local governments must be in good standing with the Department of Community Affairs.

Eligible Projects

Projects must primarily support one of the following conservation objectives:

To support state parks and trails

To support local parks and trails of state and regional significance

To provide stewardship of conservation land

To acquire critical areas

Funding Types

What type of entity may apply?

Local Parks and Trails of State & Regional Significance

Local Governments, Recreation Authorities, Nongovernmental entities

State Stewardship

State agencies and Nongovernmental entities

State land Acquisition

State agencies and Nongovernmental entities

Funding Facts

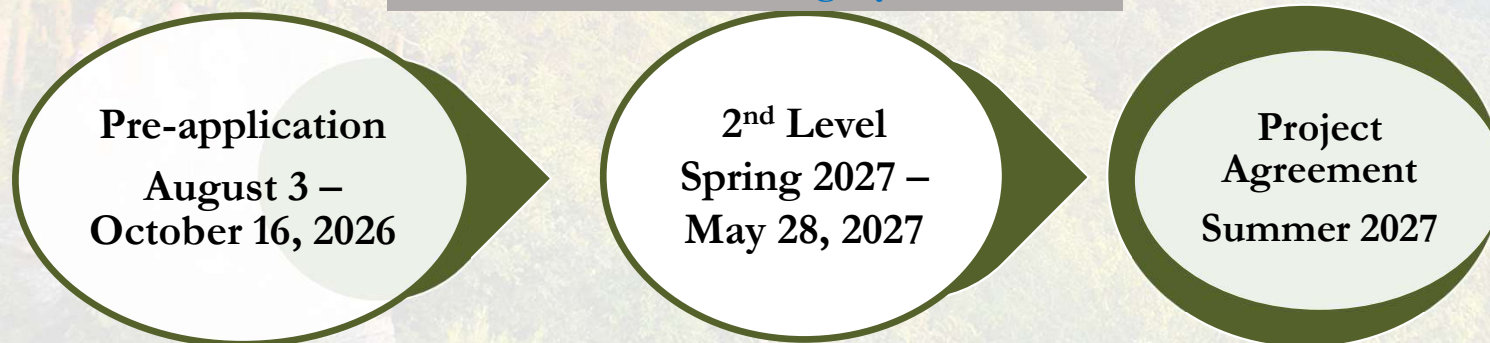
- ❑ \$500,000 - \$3,000,000 grant request
- ❑ Minimum match requirement: 25% of total project cost
- ❑ Reimbursement based - grantee pays the costs and requests for reimbursements
- ❑ 25% is held in retainage until project completion
- ❑ Grant term: 24 months

GOSP Application Process



- ❑ **Annual** Funding cycles
- ❑ Applicants may submit one proposal per cycle
- ❑ Pre-application is completed online – organizational information, evaluation criteria, and required documents
- ❑ **Pre-application is competitive**; projects are reviewed and ranked based on eligibility and evaluation criteria
- ❑ Approval Process
- ❑ Successful projects invited to **non-competitive Second-level Application phase**
Detailed project elements, surveys environmental reviews

2026-2027 GOSP Funding Cycle Timeline



What makes a good project for GOSP?

Funding available to acquire and/or improve state lands, local parks, trails and conservation lands.

Conservation & Stewardship Aspects

Nature-based Recreation Opportunities

State and Regional Significance of the Project



Conservation & Stewardship

- ❑ Permanent protection of conservation land and wildlife habitats; acquisition or conservation easements
- ❑ Protection of historic and cultural sites/resources
- ❑ Wildlife habitat management; reforestation, native tree planting, removal of invasive species, prescribed burns
- ❑ Reservoir and stream bank stabilization and restoration



Nature-based Recreation

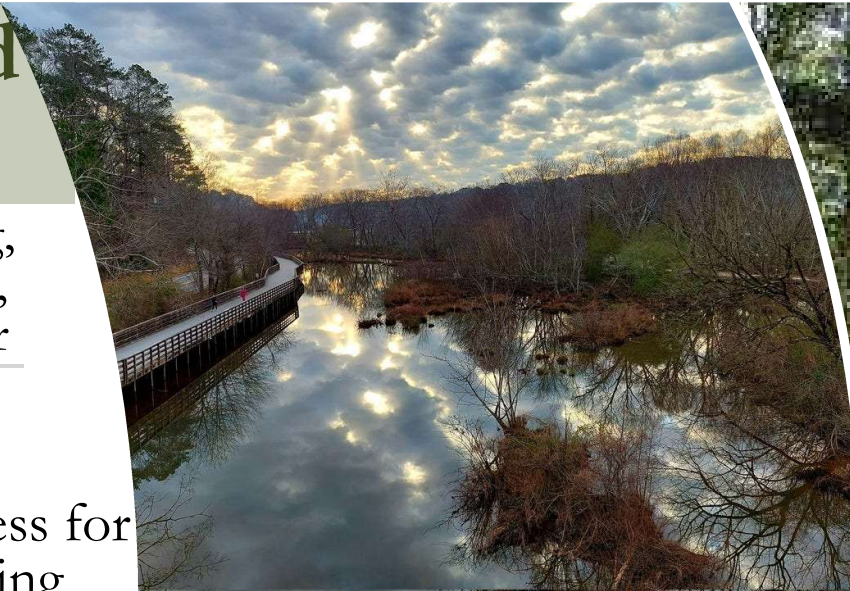
Boating, Hiking, Camping, Fishing, Hunting, Jogging, Biking, Walking, or similar outdoor activities.

Creating new water access for fishing, kayaking, canoeing, boating

Providing new opportunities for hunting and/or wildlife viewing

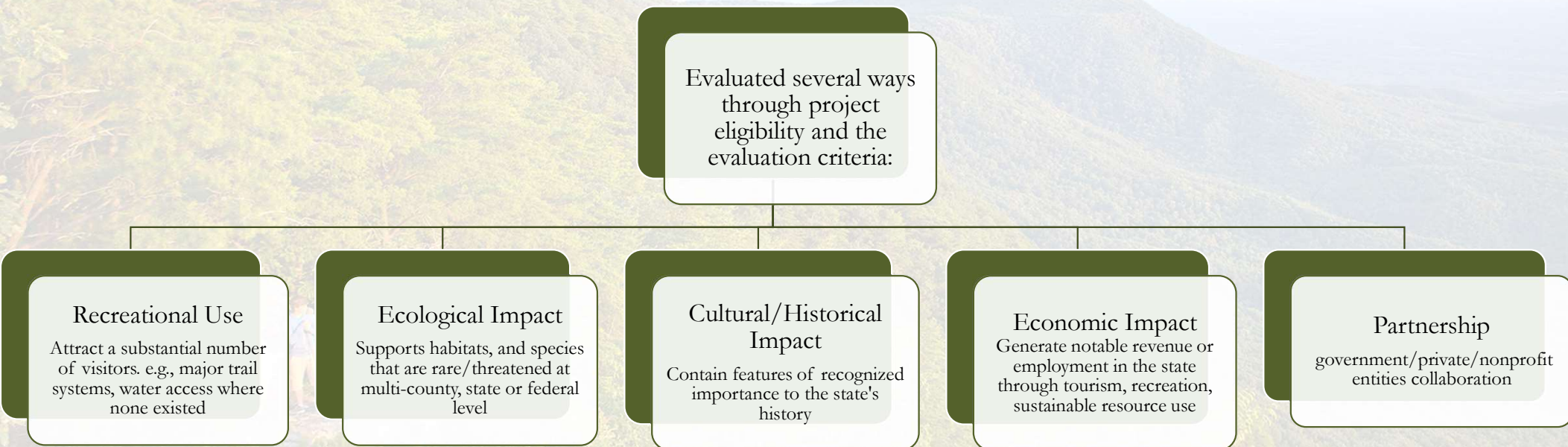
Campsite construction

Trail systems



State and Regional Significance

Projects that enhance nature-based outdoor experiences and conserve or improve the quality of natural resources. State and regionally significant projects provide meaningful ecological, recreational, cultural, and economic benefits to communities beyond the local area.





Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)



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Land & Water Conservation Fund Program

Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) Act provides funds for development, rehabilitation and/or acquisition of land for outdoor recreation.

All LWCF assisted properties must be retained and used as **ONLY** outdoor recreation **IN PERPETUITY**.



Georgia's Appropriation Amount comes from an appropriation formula applied to revenue from oil and gas lease sales.

Land & Water Conservation Fund Program

PROJECT TYPES

Development
Rehabilitation
Acquisition

Land & Water Conservation Fund Program

Development Projects: Construction of public outdoor recreation and support facilities.

Eligible Examples:

- ❑ Baseball, Football and Soccer Fields
- ❑ Tennis, Pickleball and Basketball Courts
- ❑ Playgrounds
- ❑ Concession and Restroom Buildings
- ❑ Trails
- ❑ Pools and Splashpads



Ineligible Examples:

- ❑ Gyms
- ❑ Senior Centers
- ❑ Professional/Semi-Professional Arena



Land & Water Conservation Fund Program

Rehabilitation Projects: Renovation of existing public outdoor recreation facilities into the same or different.

- ❑ Lighting Replacement
- ❑ Swimming Pool Converted to Splash Pad
- ❑ Trail Resurfacing
- ❑ Converting Tennis Courts to Pickleball Courts



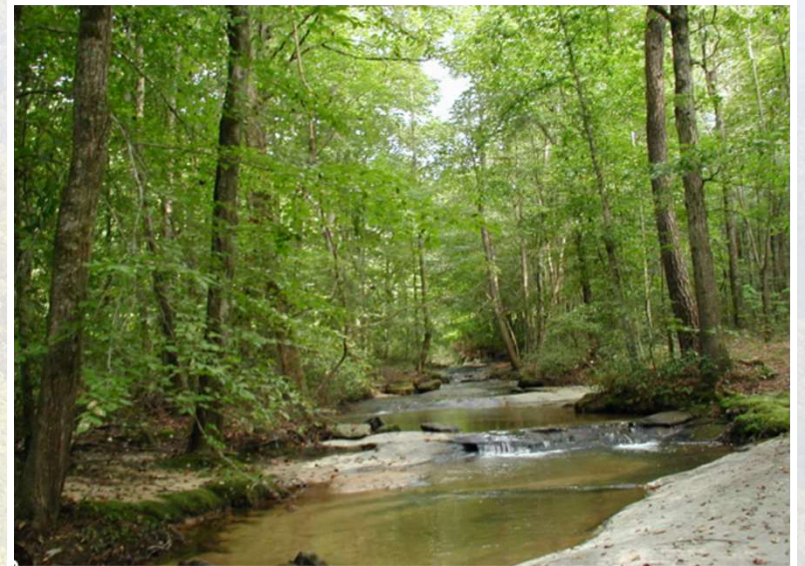
Land & Water Conservation Fund Program

Acquisition Projects: Acquisition of undeveloped land for outdoor recreational development or non-public recreation land.

LWCF only assists with appraised land value.

The following costs are NOT covered:

- ☐ Appraisals
- ☐ Appraisal Reviews
- ☐ Attorney Fees
- ☐ Title Searches



Land & Water Conservation Fund Program

- ❑ Reimbursement Program
- ❑ 50% Match Required
 - ❑ Grant Request Minimum = \$25,000
 - ❑ Grant Request Maximum = \$750,000
- ❑ Ways to Match - *All items must be associated with the project*
 - ❑ Cash or Cash Donations
 - ❑ In-Kind Labor
 - ❑ Equipment Rental or Materials
 - ❑ Donations of Labor from Private Organizations/Individuals
 - ❑ Discounts Recorded as Donations



Land & Water Conservation Fund Program

Funding cycle opens biennially.

Typically, 2 years of appropriation available for project funding.

June 24, 2026	DNR Grant Educational Webinar
August 3, 2026	Pre-Application Open
October 2, 2026	Pre-Application Closes
Oct – Nov 2026	Pre-Applications Reviewed and Ranked
December 2026	Selected Applications Announced
Jan – Apr 2027	Formal Application Building
May 2027	Formal Applications Submitted to NPS
Fall of 2027	Grant Awards Anticipated

Land & Water Conservation Fund Program

Pre-Application Requirements

- ❑ Approximately 30 Criteria Questions
- ❑ Project Narrative
- ❑ Project Budget / Cost Estimate
- ❑ Boundary Map
- ❑ Location Map
- ❑ Site / Development Plan
- ❑ Resolution
- ❑ Transmittal Letter



Recreational Trails Program (RTP)



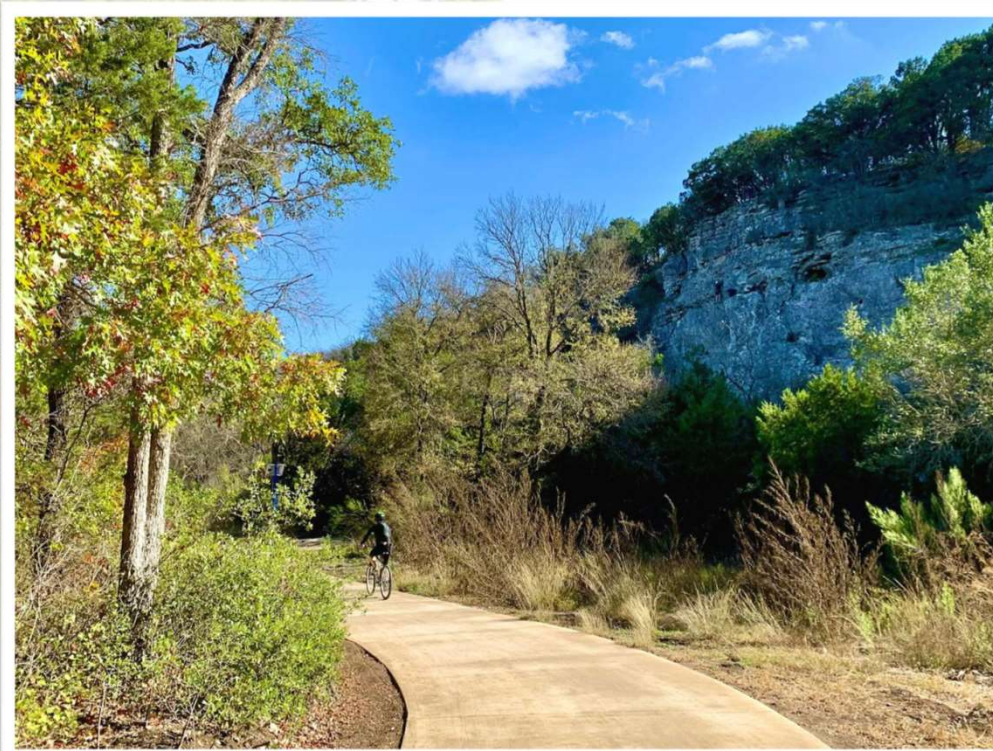
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Recreational Trails Program (RTP)



- ☐ Federal grant program administered by the Federal Highway Administration.
- ☐ Funds are allocated to Georgia from the Federal Highway Trust Fund from motor vehicle fuel excise taxes.
- ☐ Federal Highway provides essential support in financial and environmental matters.
- ☐ Funding is available for trail construction, trail maintenance, trail amenities, and trail education.

Purpose of RTP



RTP supports on the ground trail projects.

RTP provides funds for trail projects that could not be completed.

RTP seeks to improve outdoor recreational access in local communities across Georgia.

RTP Funding are NOT used for...



Transportation funding.



General park improvement funding.



Planning/design only funding.

Who Can Apply

- ✓ Cities & Counties can apply according to Department of Community Affairs (DCA)
- ✓ Authorities documented through state or local legislation.
- ✓ Commissions
- ✓ State and Federal Agencies

WHO CAN APPLY?

Qualified
Cities & Counties

Authorized
Authorities &
Commissions

State Agencies

Federal Agencies

- ✓ Non-profit organizations can partner with a qualified governmental entity or agency for trail projects.
- ✓ A non-profit organization can apply for RTP education grants.

Types of Trails

Nonmotorized



- ☐ Pedestrian
- ☐ Equestrian
- ☐ Bicycling
- ☐ Water

Motorized



- ☐ Internal Combustion Engines
- ☐ Off-Road Motorcycles
- ☐ ATV'S
- ☐ Other Off-Road Vehicles



Types of Projects



**Construction
of new
recreational
trails.**



**Restoration of
existing trails.**



**Development &
Rehabilitation
of trailhead
facilities for
recreational
trails.**



**Acquisition,
easements and
property for
recreational
trails or
corridors.**



Water Trails

Ineligible for RTP

Tracks around fields,
walking tracks,
walking tracks around buildings.



Sidewalks,
walking tracks, or trails around
recreation including
playgrounds, basketball courts,
golf courses, etc.

Funding



No minimum
funding level

Maximum grant of
\$200,000.00 for
Nonmotorized and
up to \$1,000,000.00
for motorized

Reimbursement
grant of 80%

Minimum
Match 20%

******25% is retained
until the final closeout
of the project**



Examples of Reimbursable Costs



Construction costs
(new trail or rehab)



Equipment rental



Trailhead facilities &
basic trail amenities



Land acquisition



Construction materials



Design & Engineering



ADA Accessibility upgrades

Important Note:

Contracts used in RTP projects valued at \$25,000.00 or more must go through a competitive bid process, and documents will be required.

Match

Match Requirements

- ☐ Minimum Match is 20%
- ☐ The items must be directly related to the project.
- ☐ If federal funds are used as a match, at least 5% of the total cost of the project must come from a non-federal source.
- ☐ All sources of match must be identified in the grant pre-application.
- ☐ The items for match cannot occur earlier than the signed project agreement.

Additional note:

- Design and Engineering expenses prior to the signed project agreement can be counted as match if they occurred within the 18-month.
- Donation of land can be eligible as match if occurred within 18 months before the signed project agreement.

Types of Match



GRANTEE CASH

- D&E
- Construction costs
- Materials
- Equipment rental



IN-KIND DONATIONS

- Volunteers
- Professional Services
- Materials
- Land acquisition

RTP Application Process



- ❑ **Bi-Annual** Funding Cycles
- ❑ Applicants may submit one proposal per cycle.
- ❑ Pre-application is completed online.
- ❑ **Competitive Phase:** Projects are submitted for review and ranked based on eligibility and evaluation criteria.
- ❑ Approval Process
- ❑ Successful projects invited to **formal application (Environmental Evaluation)** reviewed and cleared by FHWA.
- ❑ Financial Workshop Session
- ❑ Project Agreement

Second-Level Application



Responses to all Second-Level evaluation criteria.



Resolution from the City Council, County Commission, etc.



Detailed Cost Estimate/Project Budget.

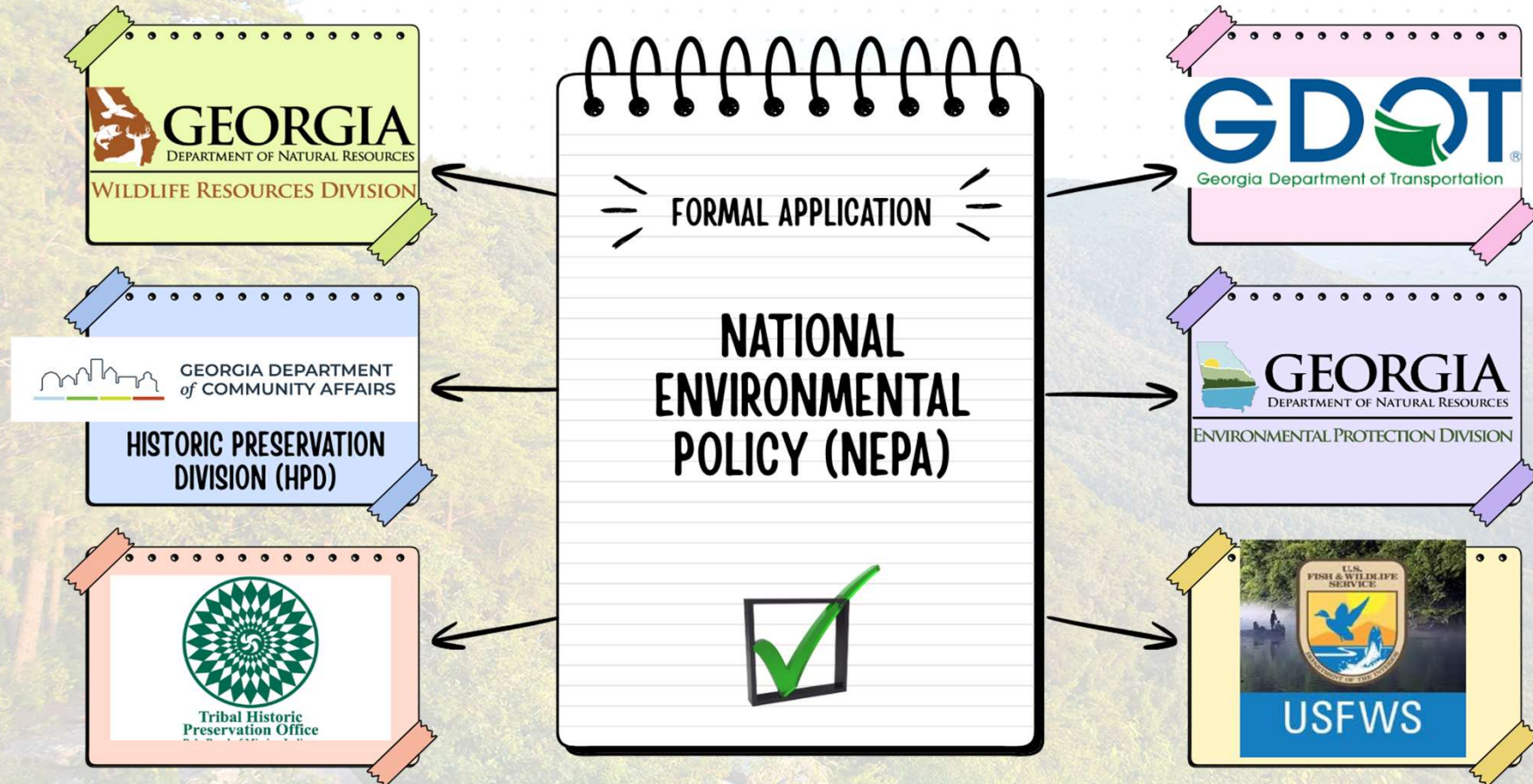


Project Description and Plans – All plans must be submitted in pdf format.



Project Implementation Schedule.

Environmental Review



RTP Previous Grant Cycle Projects



USDA Forest Service
Conasauga Ranger District
2019-2020 Grant Cycle



Gilmer County
Carter's Lake Mountain Bike Trail
2021-2022 Grant Cycle



Union City
Highway 29 Park Trail
2021-2022 Grant Cycle



City of Cedartown
Silver Comet Accessibility Improvements and Rehabilitation
2021-2022 Grant Cycle



City of Albany
Flint River Trails-Albany Downtown Connector
2019-2020 Grant Cycle

Recreational Trails Education Grant



✦ A direct relationship with one or more recreational trails is required. Projects receiving funding must be finalized within the federal fiscal year.

The Educational grant is designated for projects promoting safety and environmental protection.

Examples:

- Safety and environmental protection programs.
- Educational publications related to trails.
- Trail-related displays, videos, audio, apps, and other media.

Funding is received at 5% of annual apportionment.

For more information, contact the RTP Grant Coordinator.

Upcoming Funding Opportunities

2026-2027

GOSP



Pre-application period: August 3 – October 16, 2026
Second-level period (by invitation only): Spring 2027 – May 28, 2027
Final Approval (anticipated): Summer 2027

LWCF



Pre-application period: August 3 – October 2, 2026
Second-level period (by invitation only): January – April 2027
Final Approval (anticipated): Fall 2027

The next RTP funding cycle will open: Fall 2027.

Turning Opportunity Into Action



Visit our website www.gadnr.org/grants and sign up for email updates.



Watch tutorial videos for GOSP, RTP, and LWCF available on our webpages.



Eligibility: ensure your organization and project are eligible before starting an application.



Have a project in mind? Contact us!



Not ready for this year? Begin discussions with your authorizing officials to secure project approval and identify matching funds for a future application.





Contact Us

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