

# Utah's 2018 Open Project and Selection Process



Photo: Upper Snow Canyon State Park, by Susan Zarekarizi

Prepared by: Utah Division of Parks and Recreation in conjunction with Utah's 2014 Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan



# INTRODUCTION

The State of Utah offers Land and Water Conservation Funding (LWCF) for the development of outdoor recreation facilities through an open and competitive grant process. Information on Utah's Open Project Selection Process (OPSP) is provided for the benefit of the general public and potential grant applicants. The Utah Division of Parks and Recreation (UDPR) manage the LWCF grant program for the State of Utah.

The LWCF State Side Assistance Program was established by the LWCF act of 1965 (Section 6, Land and Water Conservation Fund Act of 1965, as amended; Public Law 88-578; 16 U.S.C. 4601-4 et seq.) to stimulate a nationwide action program to assist in preserving, developing, and assuring all citizens of the United States, in present and future generations, such quality and quantity of outdoor recreation resources as may be available and are necessary and desirable for individual active participation.

A requirement for states to maintain their eligibility to receive LWCF monies is the completion of an approved Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) and the OPSP. This OPSP was developed in accordance with the National Park Service (NPS) requirements cited in the OPSP section of the LWCF Grants-in-Aide Manual. The purpose of Utah's OPSP is ensure awareness to state and local applicants and provide an equitable submissions process; provide a measurable link to the SCORP priorities and the selection criteria; and assure LWCF assistance is accomplished in a non-discriminatory manner.

It is the policy of the Utah Division of Parks and Recreation to fully comply with the intent of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Title VI provides the no person in the United States shall, on grounds of race, color or national origin, be excluded from participating in, denied the benefits of, or subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance.

## OVERVIEW

### **LWCF State Liaison Officer**

The Governor of each state is required to designate in writing, official(s) who have authority to represent and act for the state as the State Liaison Office (SLO) and Alternate State Liaison Officer (ASLO) in dealing with the Director of the National Park Service (NPS) for the purposes of the LWCF program. The current SLO and ASLO are Fred Hayes (SLO), Director of UDPR and Susan Zarekarizi (ASLO), LWCF Coordinator. With the election of a new Governor, the SLO and ASLO must be re-designated, in writing, by the new Governor or the Governor must appoint new individuals to represent the state.

Utah's SLO and/or ASLO perform a detailed review and recommendation of each local project submitted in response to the application solicitation/notification. The criterion for the review process is detailed in the Local Projects section and the attached Ranking and Rating System. UDPR projects are processed independently from and do not compete with local projects, but must meet the basic requirements of the SCORP and OPSP.

The SLO and ASLO submit recommendations for the local grant recipients to UDPR citizen review board. Utah State Parks and Recreation Board (Park's Board) is a policy board that provides citizen oversight of staff recommendations and provides a public comment/meeting opportunity for Utah's LWCF program. UDPR projects are not submitted to Park's Board for review and recommendation, instead UDPR projects require administrative and legislative authorization.

## **Recurring Funding Cycles**

Utah's LWCF Grants Program is administered on an annual cycle. The cycle begins each year when the Secretary of the Interior issues the notice of apportionment to the governor. If the UDPR is confident that the Secretary of the Interior will apportion funds, then the grant cycle can begin before the apportionment letter is received by the state. This is usually the case, but with the uncertainty of funding that has occurred in the last couple of years, there may be years UDPR will suspend the funding cycle until such a time as funding is assured. This may cause multi-year funding cycles in Utah. Decision to suspend a grant cycle is made by the SLO and advertised on UDPR's website.

## **Local Projects**

Upon notification by the NPS of annual stateside LWCF allocations, UDPR solicits applications for proposed projects from political subdivisions through notification on our website. The application and other required documents as well as general program information can be accessed and download from UDPR's website. A hard copy can be requested as well.

The following funding schedule dates are approximate for Local Programs. The schedule was developed based on the assumption that the state will be notified of its annual apportionment by February of each year. If notification is received later, the schedule may be delayed accordingly. Workload and unforeseen issues can interfere with these approximate timeframes.

February – Public notice of the grant cycle is advertised on our website. Press releases may be made at this time as well. Grant applications and other documents are made available on UDPR website. Sponsors may begin submitting their applications to UDPR.

May 1 – Deadline for submission of current fiscal year applications to UDPR.

May 2 through June 30 – Applications are reviewed, analyzed, evaluated, and rated per the Priority System for Rating LWCF Projects. The ASLO and/or SLO conduct pre-inspections of the top recommended project sites.

July through Sept – Project recommendations are presented for review and approval at a public meeting held by Park's Board. If the Board approves the projects presented, then UDPR begins working with the project sponsors to complete their Environmental Clearance requirements.

Sept through Completion - ASLO works with the local sponsors to finish all required paperwork for submission to the NPS for project approval. UDPR funding agreements are initiated after NPS approval is attained.

## **State Projects**

UDPR uses its share of federal funds on projects that directly benefit the visitors to Utah State Parks. The criterion used to recommend UDPR projects for funding also focus on major recreation issues identified in the 2014 SCORP.

The UDPR's Construction Coordinator in consultation with the SLO and ASLO recommends the UDPR projects to be submitted for approval to the NPS. UDPR projects require administrative and/or legislative authorization and therefore are not submitted to Park's Board for review and recommendation.

The Construction Coordinator and the ASLO work together to finish the required paperwork and environmental clearance documentation required for submission and approval by the NPS. The approximate timeframe for the State Projects, for the most part, mirrors the approximate dates provided for the Local Projects.

UDPR withholds all Gulf of Mexico Energy Security Act (GOMESA) funds for state projects and/or LWCF planning emergencies.

## **Public Notification**

UDPR provides public notice on our website. If funding allows we may also issue press releases. UDPR staff annually attends the local recreation association conference in the spring where information on the LWCF grant program, application dates, application documents, and general information about UDPR grants programs is presented to the local recreation community and governmental entities.

## **Program Technical Assistance**

UDPR provides technical assistance to all LWCF applicants through our website and contact with the ASLO/SLO. The ASLO and SLO make every effort possible to answer questions regarding the application procedures/requirements, ranking criteria and general program requirements.

# **The Open Public Selection Process (OPSP)**

## **Public Process**

Federal guidelines require that the state's SCORP and OPSP include opportunities for public participation before implementation of the new program criteria. All documents and announcements/press releases were posted on UDPR's website. The SCORP and OPSP were/are also made available through an intergovernmental/public review website. Two separate surveys were used to ensure public participation and input into the development of the SCORP's recreation priorities.

## **Authority**

Title 79-2-202, Utah Code Annotated (UCA) authorizes the executive director of the Utah Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to prepare and keep current a comprehensive outdoor recreation plan, and submit the same to the governor for review and approval. The development of the SCORP is delegated to the Division of Utah State Parks and Recreation (UDPR).

The executive director of the DNR may also apply for federal assistance and receive federal aid for outdoor recreation land acquisition and facility development under Title 79-2-402. Section 79-2-402 further delineates the powers and responsibilities under the federal outdoor recreation funding program.

### **Special Reapportionment Account**

Projects that have been approved by the NPS may be completed, closed, or withdrawn with excess funds left in the account. The NPS places these funds into the Special Re-apportionment Account. In order to be eligible to use these reapportioned funds, the state must have all federal reports and a reapportionment request (SRA) submitted to the NPS. Once these requirements are met the NPS may authorize the reallocation of the funds to the state. The distribution of the SRA will be available to the UDPR year round for additional projects and amendments, but not to political subdivisions, unless UDPR has no projects in the queue. At the discretion of the SLO, funds may be made available to political subdivisions.

### **UDPR Evaluation Rating/Ranking Sheet for LWCF Projects (As Attached)**

# PRIORITY SYSTEM FOR RATING LWCF PROJECTS

UTAH OPSP Revised January 2018

## I. ADMINISTRATIVE CONSIDERATIONS (participant): 400 points Total

- A. Administrative Capacity (100 points)
  - 1. Application is properly completed and signed. (25 points)
  - 2. All required copies of the application and supporting documents are included. (25 points)
  - 3. All required questions have been answered and the project is well defined/described. (25 points)
  - 4. Cost estimates are reasonable and do not include ineligible items. (25 points)
- B. Utilization of Funds & Fiscal Administration (100 points)
  - 1. New applicant – ability to maintain adequate financial records (100 points)
  - 2. A history of good turnover of funds and completes their projects on time. (100 points)
  - 3. Marginal record (50 points)
  - 4. Poor utilization – holds funds too long – poor accounting practices (25 points)
- C. Availability of Other Sources of Funding (100 points) Is the applicant eligible for other (federal or state) matching fund opportunities?
  - 1. No other qualifying matching funds, applicant has dedicated funding in place to match the grant. (100 points)
  - 2. Applicant provides <50% cash match from other sources or in-kind. (75 points)
  - 3. 100% of matching funds are from other sources or the project is eligible for grants from other grant programs that are better suited to the project. (25 points)
  - 4. The sources of matching funds are not identified or 100% of the matching funds are from donations and the letters or support and committal are not included. (0 points)
- D. State Responsibility (100 points) Points are awarded if the State of Utah has an obligation to the federal government to complete a useable facility.
  - 1. Necessary for a useable project and state responsibility (100 points)
  - 2. Completion of a partial development or phased project (50 points)
  - 3. Project is unrelated to any state responsibility (0 points)

## II. MAGNITUDE OF LOSS: 300 points Total

- A. High importance and critical timing (300 points)
- B. Important and timely (200 points)
- C. Timing is not critical (100 points)

## III. MEETING IDENTIFIED OUTDOOR RECREATION NEEDS (2014 SCORP): 400 points Total

- A. Based on local or regional needs assessment the project provides:
  - 1. For the most favored new facilities (200 points)
  - 2. For the most favored improved facilities (150 points)
- B. Relation of this project to similar facilities in the immediate area (150 points)

1. No such facilities within a reasonable distance (150 points)
  2. Present facilities are inadequate (not due to O & M) (100 points)
  3. Facilities adequate, but addition would enhance program (75 points)
  4. Other facilities are capable of handling the use (50 points)
  5. Facilities are inadequate due to poor O & M (25 points)
- C. The sponsor has furnished a current survey, needs assessment or formally approved master plan (50 points)

**IV. SITE LOCATION (in relation to the area served): 200 points Total**

A. The location relative to main user groups (100 points)

1. Excellent (100 points)
2. Very Good (75 points)
3. Good (50 points)
4. Fair (25 points)
5. Poor (0 points)

B. Adequacy of access to the site (100 points)

1. Excellent (100 points)
2. Very Good (75 points)
3. Good (50 points)
4. Fair (25 points)
5. Poor (0 points)

**V. SOCIO-ECONOMIC FACTORS: 250 points Total**

A. Recreation public served by the project (100 points)

1. All age groups, genders, socio-economic groups (100 points)
2. Some, but not all diversified groups (50 points)
3. Few diversified groups (25 points)

B. Population growth factor, based on the 2010 vs 2016V census

(1 point for each percent of increase – 100 points maximum)

C. Non-resident and resident tourist use – economic benefit

Favoring projects that have secondary benefits from tourism (50 points)

1. Major tourism benefit (50 points)
2. Substantial tourism benefit (40 points)
3. Medium tourism benefit (30 points)
4. Minor benefit (10 points)

**VI. PLANNING, DESIGN AND FACILITY MAINTENANCE: 250 points Total**

A. Applicant has demonstrated a recreation activity and facility maintenance program that is:

1. Excellent (100 points)
2. Very good (75 points)
3. Good (50 points)
4. Fair (25 points)
5. Poor (0 points)

B. The project is innovative and unique in design, activity, or use of site. (100 points)

1. Highly innovative or unique (100 points)
2. Somewhat innovative or unique (75 points)

3. Functional facility (50 points)
  4. Limited design or use of site (25 points)
  5. Poor design or use of site (0 points)
- C. Seasonal activities - (50 points).  
Favoring expanded recreation opportunity – extended, normal, or limited hours;  
extended season based on multiple use.