

APPENDIX A

Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Grants, Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), and Recreational Trails Program (RTP)

2023 APPLICATION MATERIALS AND INSTRUCTIONS

Dear Applicant:

Thank you for your interest in the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship, Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) and Recreational Trails Program (RTP) grants. Please make yourself familiar with the process, project eligibility requirements and the terms and conditions of these grants – all available on the DNR website linked below and from [regional Project Managers](#).

All application materials are located at: <https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/topic/Stewardship/ApplyLUG>

If you cannot open the application forms, or you are getting an error message rather than a grant application form, it's likely due to an incompatibility issue between your web browser and the PDF format. Troubleshooting tips are available here: <https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/site/pdf>.

Application deadlines – DNR will rank and evaluate complete applications received by **11:59 pm on May 1, 2023**.

Application materials – All required application forms are available on the DNR's website on the "Application materials" tab. An application checklist is included in the program guidance document.

Timing of grant evaluation and award – If your project is selected for funding, you will be notified of a *tentative* award approximately 4 months after the application deadline. Final award and payment will be subject to several additional required reviews, including, in some cases, approval of the Natural Resources Board and the Joint Committee on Finance. The time between submitting a complete application and receiving a grant contract ranges from six to twelve months. While we strive to make review as efficient as possible, **we advise applicants to factor this into their timelines**.

From the Stewardship, LWCF, and RTP grant staff, thank you!

What's new?

Please read this, even if you're a seasoned applicant...

Some important and new notes about 2023 project evaluation

- 1. PLEASE CONTACT US BEFORE APPLYING:** It is helpful for staff to know what applications will be forthcoming. Please contact your regional Project Manager to alert us to new applications and to discuss your project before applying. That is especially true in the following circumstances:
 - **Grants exceeding \$250,000** – Projects slated to receive funding require approval of the Legislature's Joint Committee on Finance. The Committee's review adds both time and a degree of uncertainty to the end of the evaluation and approval process. Ample planning time can benefit such projects.
 - **Projects proposing the value of another property as match** – Please review guidance about eligibility and discuss property to be used as match with your regional Project Manager before you contract an appraiser.
- 2. RANKING CRITERIA REVISIONS:** Repeat applicants will notice that questions have been revised and new questions have been added. Please read through the ranking questions carefully.
- 3. CHANGES TO THE LAND AND WATER CONSERVATION FUND (LWCF) PROGRAM:**
 - LWCF funds are distributed regionally based on population. Thirty percent of the LWCF allocation will be equally distributed to the five DNR grant regions. The remaining 70% will be distributed to the regions based on population. This change distributes the LWCF funding more equally across the state.
 - LWCF-specific criteria were added to Section D of the program guidance. All LWCF applications will be ranked against projects within each region and no longer statewide.
 - Applications will no longer be reviewed as "LWCF Only" projects. The addition of Section D will distinguish those projects more specifically suited for LWCF funding.
- 4. CHANGES TO THE RECREATIONAL TRAILS PROGRAM (RTP):**
 - A question was added to the RTP eligible Section C to address trail renovation or new development that includes innovative or unique design to accommodate or appeal to persons with disabilities and/or other diverse populations.
 - The RTP grant program falls under the FAST Act, so acquisition applications are not being accepted for State Fiscal Year 2024 due to the timeframe that must be met.
- 5. CHANGES TO THE STEWARDSHIP LOCAL GOVERNMENT PROGRAM:**

New criteria based on subprogram priorities have been added to the ranking questions:

 1. Riverway acquisition contributions to riverway or lake management plans
 2. Design of basic facilities
 3. Open and natural corridors
- 6. PLEASE SUBMIT ELECTRONIC FILES FOR EACH DOCUMENT** rather than one large file of the whole application package. Grant staff do not have the software to break apart big files.
- 7. APPRAISALS:** Please contact Greg Hicks, DNR Appraisal Reviewer, prior to hiring an appraiser. Greg can be reached at 608-640-7241 or gregory.hicks@wisconsin.gov.