



Georgia Outdoor Stewardship Program (GOSP)

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Soheila Naji
Grants Unit Supervisor
GOSP Coordinator
soheila.naji@dnr.ga.gov
404-463-8570



Trevor Brownlee
GOSP Grants Specialist
Miltontrevor.Brownlee@dnr.ga.gov
404-463-0288

GOSP Background

Mission:

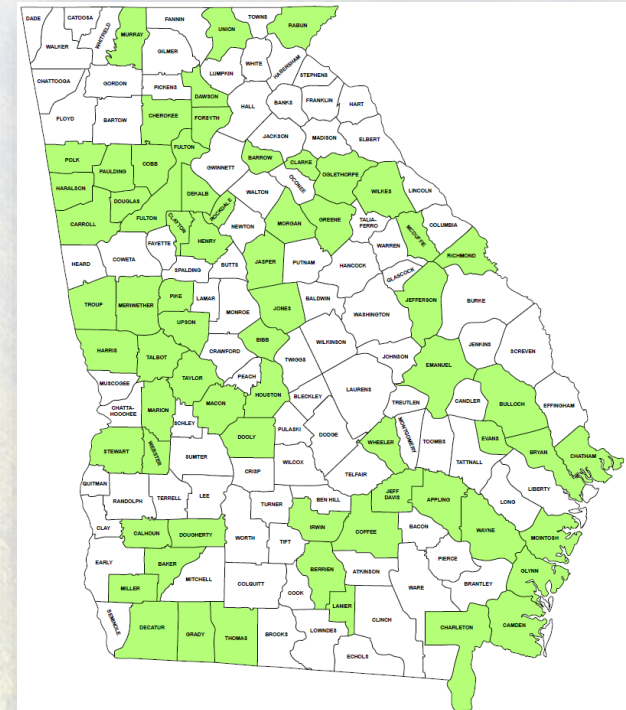
Coordinate and administer funding to provide stewardship for state parks, state lands and wildlife management areas; support local parks and trails; and protect critical conservation land.

Where Does GOSP Funding Come From?

Moneys received by the state from the sales and use tax collected by outdoor recreation equipment establishments

Enacted in 2019 – Six successful funding cycles

- 
- 74 projects funded
 - 66 counties impacted
 - \$142 M funds allocated
 - 62,900 acres acquired



GOSP Structure

The Board of Trustees of the Georgia Outdoor Stewardship Trust Fund

Accepts, evaluates, and approves project proposals in accordance with priorities established by the GOSA legislation and priorities approved by the Board of Trustees.

Projects approved by the Board of Trustees are then reviewed for approval by the Board of Natural Resources and the appropriations subcommittees maintaining oversight authority over GADNR and GEFA (Georgia Environmental Finance Authority).

Voting Members

- ❑ The Commissioner of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources (Chairperson of the Board)
- ❑ The Director of the State Forestry Commission
- ❑ The Director of the Environmental Protection Division (EPD)
- ❑ The Commissioner of Transportation
- ❑ Two members appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives
- ❑ Two members appointed by the President of the Senate

❑ Ex Officio, Nonvoting Members

- ❑ The director of the DNR Coastal Resources Division
- ❑ The director of the DNR Wildlife Resources Division
- ❑ The director of DNR State Parks and Historic Sites Division

Who Can Apply?

Qualified Local Governments

Constituted Recreation Authorities

State Agencies

Nongovernmental Entities *

Any nonprofit organization registered with the Secretary of State's office, primarily concerned with the protection and conservation of land and natural resources, as evidenced by its organizational documents.

Ineligibility

Entities not in good standing with the Department of Community Affairs (DCA)

<https://apps.dca.ga.gov/LocalGovStatus/planning.asp>

Funding Facts

\$500,000 - \$3,000,000 grant request

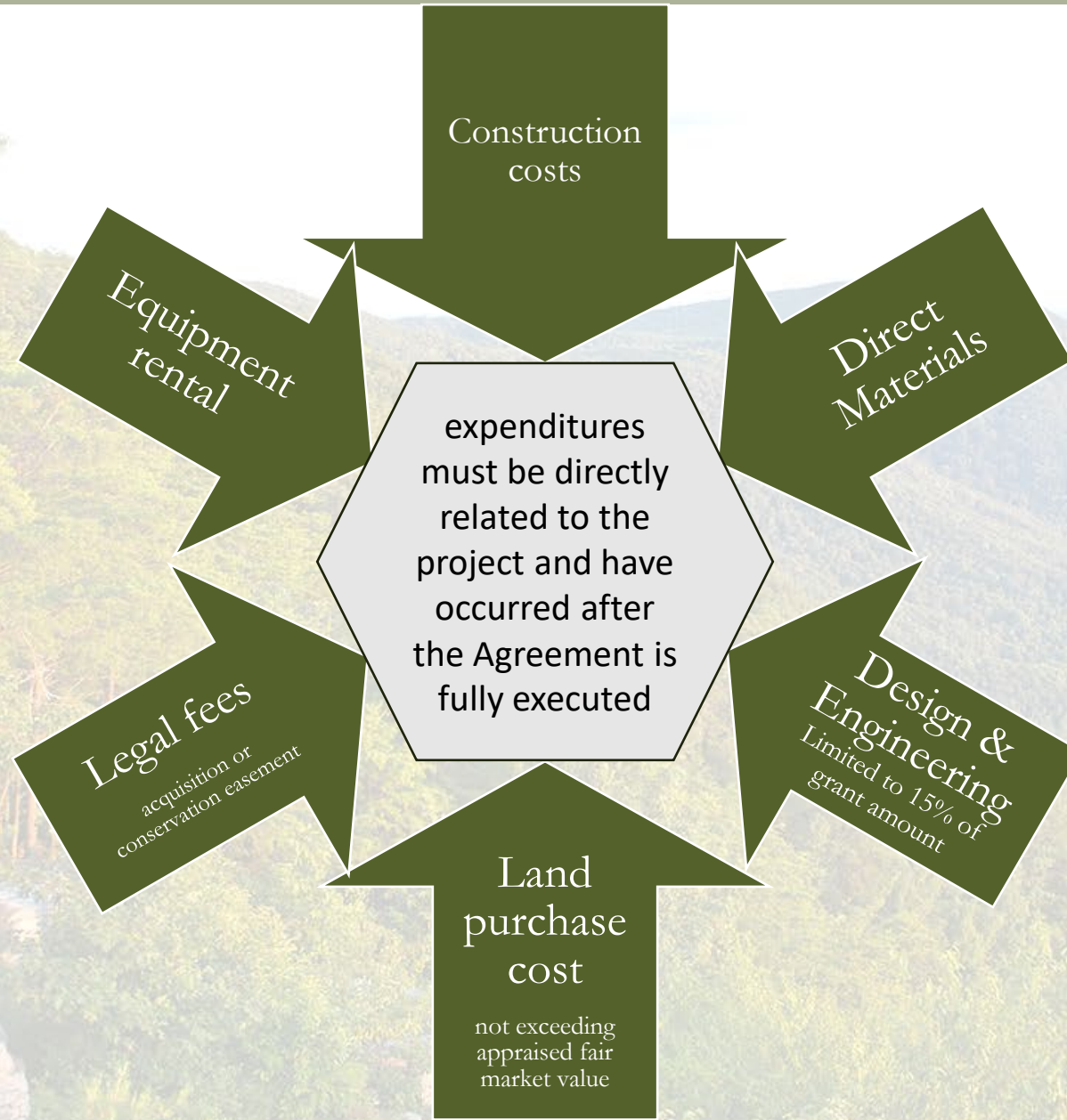
Minimum match requirement of 25% of project cost

Reimbursement based - grantee pays the costs and request for reimbursements

25% is held in retainage until project completion

Grant term: 24 months

Reimbursements



- ❑ 25% of each reimbursement request will be retained.
- ❑ Retainage will be released upon completion of project.

Match Requirement - Common Sources

- ❑ Minimum required match: 25% of total project cost
- ❑ Higher match will yield higher point awards on the Pre-application

- ❑ Cash expenses by the Applicant
- ❑ Funds secured via external grant
- ❑ Financial donations from private organizations/individuals
- ❑ In-kind labor, equipment, and materials provided by the Applicant
- ❑ In-kind donations of labor, services, materials, and equipment from private organizations and individuals.
- ❑ Donation of real property or conservation easements from a third party

<u>25% match</u>	<u>example 1</u>	<u>example2</u>
Total Project cost	\$667,000	\$1,000,000
Grant value (75%)	\$500,000	\$750,000
Minimum match (25%)	\$167,000	\$250,000

Match Eligibility Period

- ❑ Expenditures must be directly related to the project and have occurred during the 24-month project period.
 - ❑ Exception: Appraisals, design and engineering, environmental compliance reviews, and grant writing expenses are eligible for MATCH ONLY if within 18 months of the close of the second level.
 - ❑ Must not exceed 15% of the total project cost.
-

Example:

Total Project Cost = \$1,000,000

Pre-agreement MATCH of \$150,000 or less is acceptable

Items **INELIGIBLE** for Match or Reimbursement

Maintenance

Admin costs

Food, beverage, or travel

Indirect costs

Consulting services

Large equipment and tool purchase

Grand opening ceremonies

Items paid for outside of the project agreement dates

Design and/or Planning only Projects



Application Process



GOSP Application Process

Annual Funding cycles

Applicants may submit one proposal per grant cycle

May submit Pre-applications to both RTP and GOSP. Projects must not depend on each other.

100% Online Pre-application – organizational information, evaluation criteria, required documents

Competitive Pre-application; projects reviewed & ranked based on eligibility and evaluation criteria

Approval Process

Successful projects invited to **non-competitive Second-level Application**

2025-2026 GOSP Funding Cycle Timeline

Pre-application

August 1 –
October 17, 2025

2nd Level

Spring 2026 –
May 29, 2026

Project
Agreement
Summer 2026

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
 - ❑ Improving quality of Georgia's rivers, streams, lakes, etc.



Nature-based Recreation

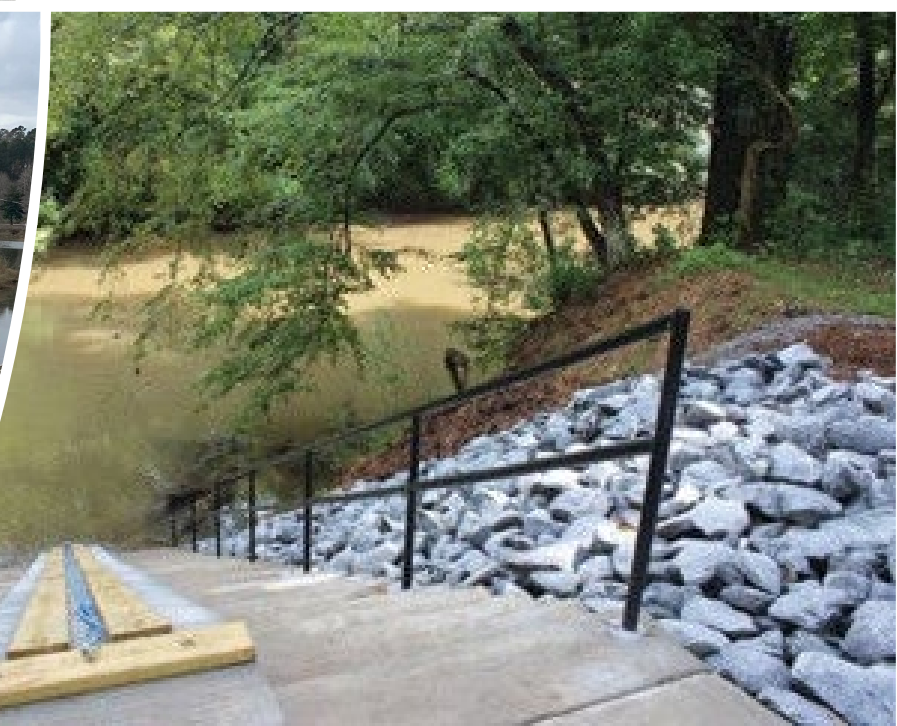
Boating, Hiking, Camping, Fishing, Hunting, Jogging, Biking, Walking, or similar outdoor activities.

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

Providing new opportunities for hunting and/or wildlife viewing

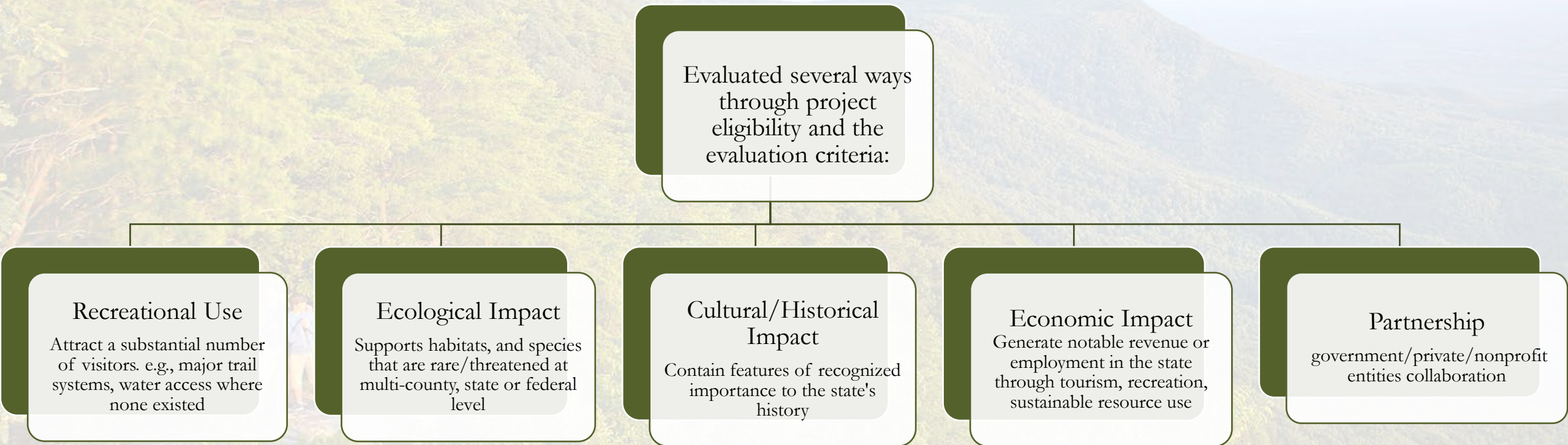
Campsite construction

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.





GOSP Funding Types



Project Fundin Types

Local Parks and Trails
of State and Regional Significance

State Stewardship

State Acquisition

Local Parks & Trails of Regional Significance

Available to: Local Governments, Constituted Recreation Authorities,
and Nonprofit Organizations



Acquisitions to include conservation easements



Local restoration or improvement projects



Combination projects: Acquisition **AND** Stewardship elements

State Stewardship

Available to: State of Georgia Agencies and Nonprofit Organizations

Restoration, development or improvement projects on current State-owned parks or state-owned conservation land .

Local governments and constituted recreation authorities MAY NOT apply for State Stewardship

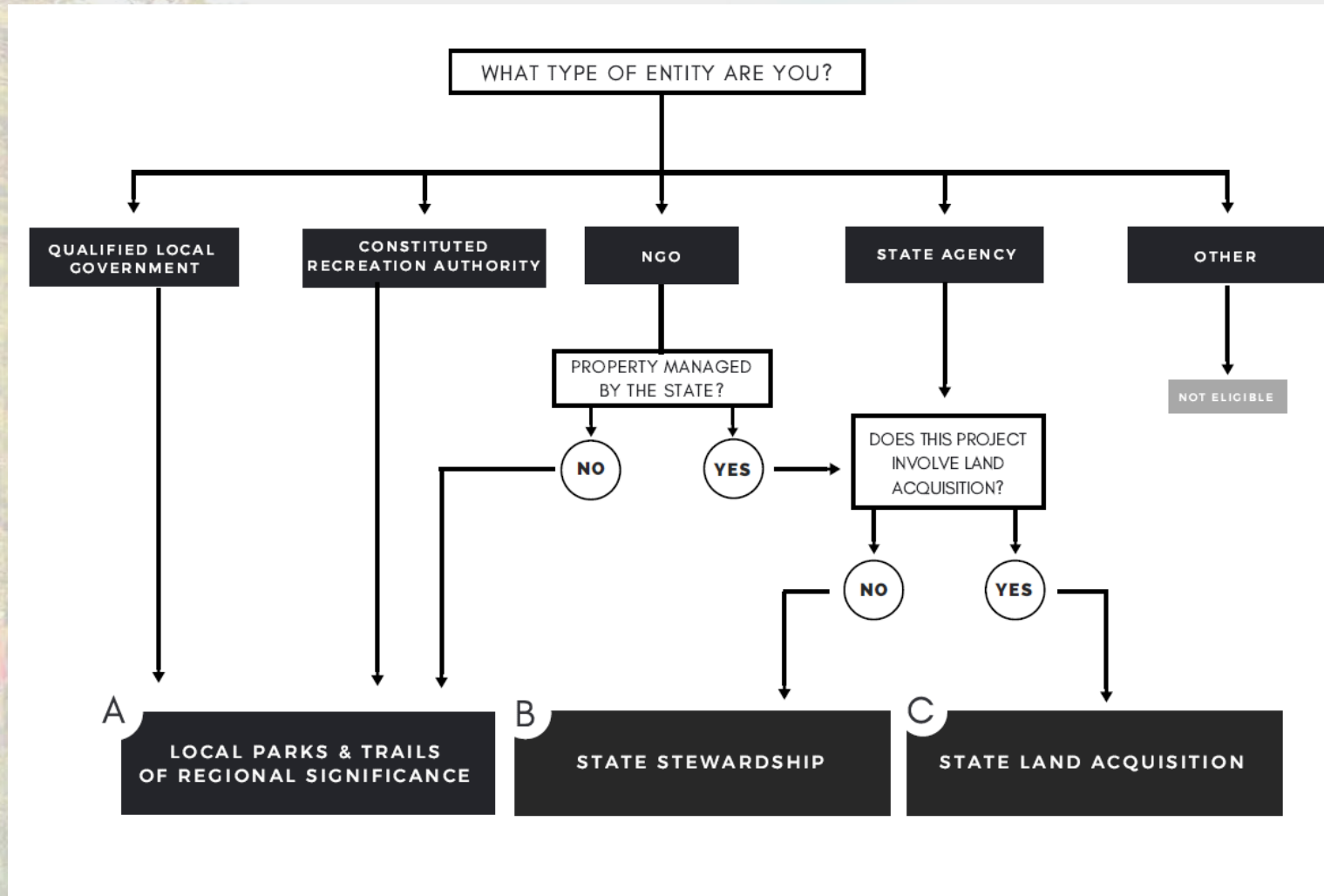
State Land Acquisition

Available to: State of Georgia Agencies and Nonprofit Organizations

- ❑ Acquisitions of property and conservation easements
- ❑ Combination projects: Acquisition AND Stewardship

Local governments and constituted
recreation authorities MAY NOT apply for
State Land Acquisition

Identifying the proper Application Type to complete





Pre-application



The Online Application Process

- ❑ The Pre-Application is the initial stage of the application process.
- ❑ The Pre-application is the only competitive section of the application process.
- ❑ Selected projects will be invited to submit a Second-level Application.



Before the Pre-application

Eligibility

Your organization and project are eligible

Your project meets the purpose of the grant you want to apply for

You have the support of the authorizing officials who must sign off on each stage of this grant process

Your organization can fulfill the match requirement

No previously completed work included in your proposal

GOSP will not reimburse for ANY work performed before a mutually executed agreement, anticipated in summer 2026.

Ensure

Note

Follow Directions

The manual is your guide. Contains instructions for successfully completing each section of the application.

Carefully read criteria questions to understand exactly what the reviewer is looking for.

Lots of questions require the applicant to upload documentation to receive points.

If you answer “No” often on Pre-application, it is unlikely that you will be selected. Is your project a good fit for the Program?

Understand the amount of work to complete the application.

Sample application available on our website

Managing a successful grant can be challenging. Is your organization able to manage this grant through to a successful and timely completion?

Managing these grants requires a lot of upfront costs, regular progress reporting, and detailed recordkeeping.

Keep Reviewers in mind

Focus on Narrative

Narrative and budget help us understand how you'll spend the funds

Tell us clearly what you need the funds for

What makes your project better than your competitors'?

Focus on tangible project elements and impact

Make it easy to understand the scope of work

Avoid speculative phrases

Be concise

Strong visuals matter; well-labeled maps & photos

Pre-application Evaluation Criteria (Not an Exhaustive List)

- ❑ Identified priority needs
- ❑ Nature-based recreational opportunities
- ❑ Best Management Practices beyond required by local/state/federal law
- ❑ Cultural or historical value
- ❑ Ecological value
- ❑ Maintenance & management
- ❑ Regional significance
- ❑ Partnership
- ❑ Georgia's current State Wildlife Action Plan (SWAP)
- ❑ Georgia's current State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP)
- ❑ Regional economic impact
- ❑ Connecting to other recreational facilities

Required Documentation (Not an Exhaustive List)

- ❑ Pre-Application Cover Letter
- ❑ Resolution adopted by the Applicant's governing body authorizing the application and committing to availability of funding
- ❑ Preliminary Site Plan / Conceptual Plan
- ❑ Project Boundary map
- ❑ Property Location Map
- ❑ **Generalized** cost estimate/Project Budget
- ❑ Appraisals (Acquisition projects only)
- ❑ Landowner support letter(if Applicant and owner are not the same)

Project Budget – Required for All Applicants

- ❑ Must utilize the form on our website:
www.gadnr.org/gosp
- ❑ Should be **generalized**, but still **comprehensive**.
- ❑ All eligible project elements must be in budget worksheet.
- ❑ **All contributions from partners must be included in the budget.**
- ❑ Must adhere to your budget. All project items must be completed to successfully close out your project and receive your retainage.
- ❑ **Budget changes may require a formal amendment request or completion of a new application – Consider changes carefully!**

GEORGIA OUTDOOR STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
PROJECT BUDGET WORKSHEET

Applicant Name:

Project Title:

Date:

Project History				
Total Project Cost:		<input type="text" value="\$1,204,000.00"/>		
Total Amount of Funding Requested:		<input type="text" value="\$710,000.00"/>		
Total Match Commitment:		<input type="text" value="\$494,000.00"/>		

Category Number	Description (include units in Description where possible)	Cash Match	In-Kind Match	Requested Funding
1	Design & Engineering	\$200,000.00		
2	Campground Construction		\$85,000.00	\$310,000.00
3	Trail Construction	\$90,000.00		\$130,000.00
4	Trail Amenities	\$12,000.00	\$5,000.00	\$50,000.00
5	Habitat Restoration			\$220,000.00
6	Invasive Removal		\$22,000.00	
7	Land Donation		\$80,000.00	
8				
9				
10				
11				
12				
13				
14				
TOTALS		\$302,000.00	\$192,000.00	\$710,000.00
GRAND TOTAL		\$1,204,000.00		

Volunteers who donate job specific professional skills and/or equipment operation (grading contractors, plumbers, electricians, etc.) can value their time and/or equipment at their standard rates but may not exceed the rates outlined at https://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes_ga.htm. General labor rates (no professional skills required) must not exceed \$11.40 per hour.

Second Level Application Requirements (Not an Exhaustive List)

Detailed Project Budget worksheet

Project Implementation Schedule

Phase I Environmental Survey

Appraisal Report (if applicable)

Documentation for Environmental Reviews

- ❑ Historic Preservation Division's Review
- ❑ Environmental Protection Division's Review
- ❑ Wildlife Resources Division's Review
- ❑ Department of Transportation's Review

After Full Application is Approved

Mandatory financial workshop

prior to project agreement, covering reimbursement process and reporting requirements

“**Day 1**” is the date the agreement is mutually signed

Grantees have **24 months** from Day 1 to complete their project

Funding eligibility begins on **Day 1**

Reimbursement of eligible expenses requires robust documentation (see program manual for details)

25% Retainage

is withheld from each reimbursement request

Final 25% payment is released by DNR after all commitments are met

In case of match shortfall, **DNR** will adjust the retainage payment

Overpayments must be refunded to GEFA by the grantee.

Closeout

Project close out must occur within 45 days of project completion.

Grantee submits a final quarterly report marked as “Final” including:

- ❑ Confirmation that the project is complete, accessible, and open to the public (if applicable)
- ❑ Photos of the completed work
- ❑ “As built” plans in .pdf format

Grantee submit a final reimbursement request marked “Final”

For acquisitions only – submit an updated property deed with required protective language and recording stamp from the local jurisdiction’s County Clerk’s office

Acknowledgement of GOSP participation shall be installed at project location

DNR conducts a site inspection

Long-term Obligations for GOSP Recipients



Retain documents for at least
5 years
or 5 years after any litigation,
(if applicable)

Must maintain legal control
and oversight of the property

Property must be properly
maintained

Reasonable user fees may
be charged; revenues must
support project management
and maintenance.

Real property or conservation
easements funded by GOSP:

- ❑ Protected in perpetuity
- ❑ Maintained as conservation land
- ❑ Comply with protective deed language