GEORGIA
Department of Natural Resources

Georgia Outdoor Stewardship Program (GOSP)

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GOSP Background

- Georgia Outdoor Stewardship Act (GOSA) was passed in 2018 general election and Georgia Outdoor Stewardship Program (GOSP) became active in July 2019.

- Five successful cycles:
  - 62 projects
  - 58 counties impacted
  - $118M GOSP funding allocated
  - 50,000 acres acquired

GOSA 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.
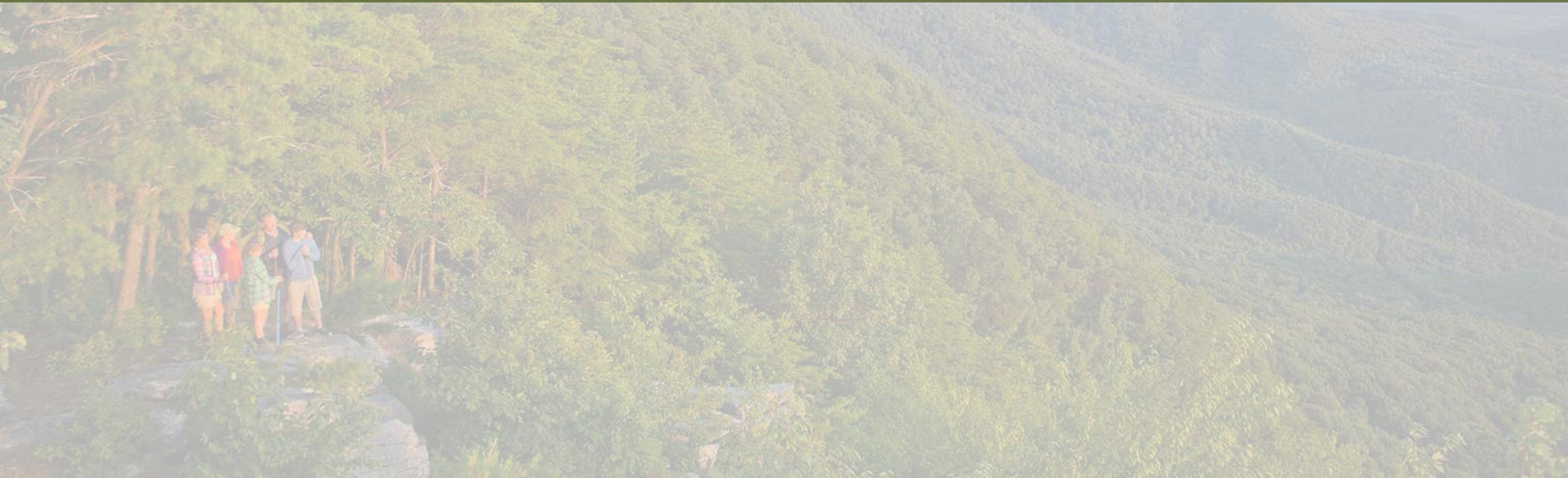
Where Does GOSP Funding Come From?

The GOSA Trust is funded by:

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

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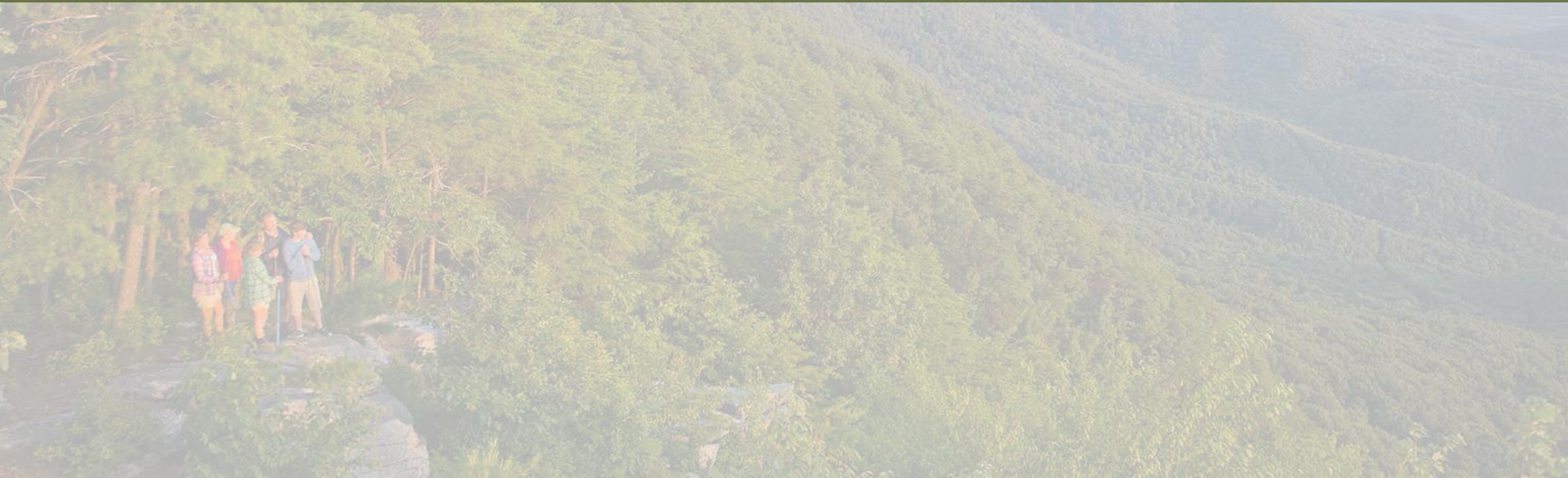# GOSP Terms

Frequently Used Terms in GOSP

- "**Natural-resource recreation**" means recreation in the form of boating, hiking, camping, fishing, hunting, jogging, biking, walking or similar outdoor activities.

  These examples are taken straight from the GOSA statute.

- "**Stewardship**" is defined as maintenance, restoration, or improvement projects.

GOSP Structure

The GOSP Board of Trustees

- 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).

The GOSP Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees consists of 11 members as follows:

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) of the Department of Natural Resources
- The Commissioner of Transportation
- Two members appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives
- Two members appointed by the President of the Senate
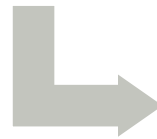
Ex Officio, Nonvoting Members

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

GOSP Application Timeline

Workshops
June 2024
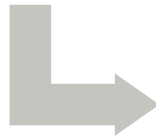
Pre-application
August 1 –
October 15, 2024

Second-level
Applications
Spring 2025 –
May 30 2025,

Project Agreements
Summer 2025

Who Can Apply?

Qualified Local Governments according to Department of Community Affairs (DCA)

Constituted Recreation Authorities

All State Agencies

Nongovernmental Entities

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

Minimum grant of $500,000

Maximum grant of $3,000,000

Reimbursement Program

Match minimum of 25%

Grant term: 24 months

Loans are also available

Match

- Minimum required match is 25% of total project cost
- Applicants can commit to a larger match

- 25% match

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

Common Sources of Match

Grantee Cash

- Engineering
- Construction costs
- Materials
- Equipment rental

In-kind Donations

- Volunteers
- Professional Services
- Materials
- Land donation

Match Eligibility Period

- 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.

Examples of Reimbursable Costs

- Construction costs
- Materials
- Equipment rental
- Design & Engineering - Limited to 15% of the requested grant amount
- Land acquisition
- Legal fees for acquisition

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

Examples of Ineligible Match or Reimbursement Items

- Maintenance
- Admin costs
- Food, beverage, or travel
- Indirect costs
- Consulting services (except grant writing as defined previously)
- Large equipment and large tool purchase
- Grand openings
- Items paid for outside of the project agreement dates
- Design and/or Planning only Projects
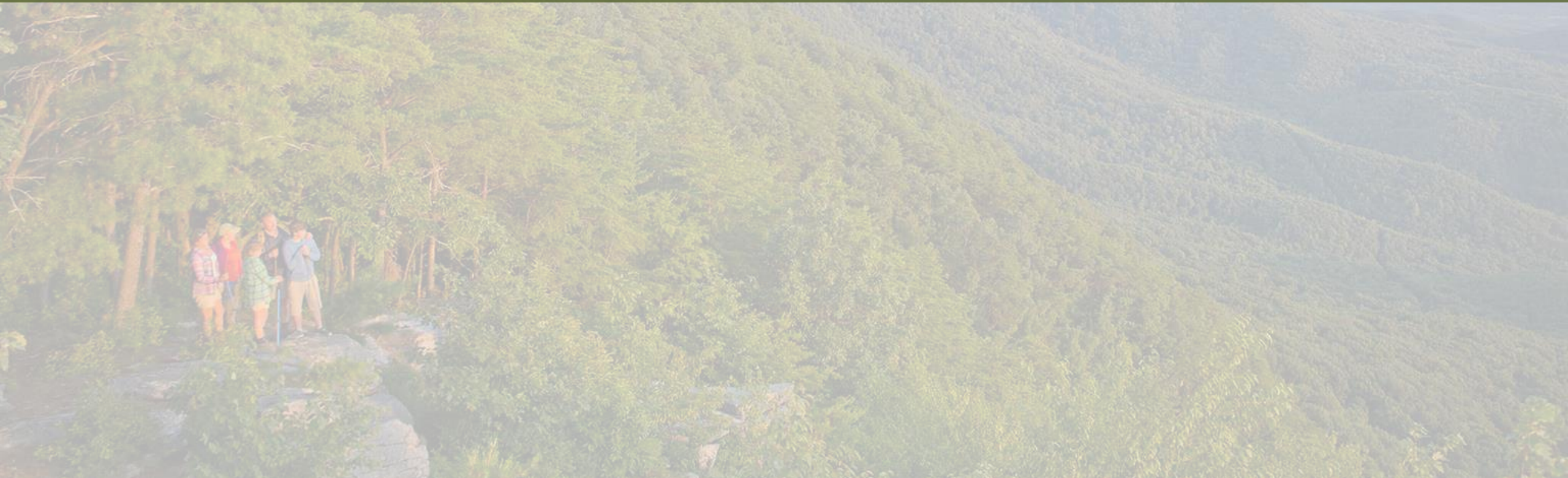
Application For GOSP Grant

GOSP offers a funding cycle every year.

Applicants may only submit one GOSP proposal per cycle.

Applicants may submit Pre-applications to both LWCF and GOSP. Projects cannot be dependent upon one another.

Competitive GOSP Projects

- Acquisition projects
- Protection of wildlife habitat
- Protection of cultural sites/historic resources, and creating access for public
- Protection of land around Georgia's military installations
- Provision for nature-based recreation

Competitive GOSP Projects

- Acquiring ecologically valuable habitat
- Permanent protection of state and federally threatened species
- Create access for fishing and hunting
- Campsite construction

Competitive GOSP Projects

- Stream bank stabilization/restoration
- Reservoir enhancements
- Large scale invasive removal
- Native groundcover planting
- Reduce erosion
- Improve water quality of endangered river, benefiting wildlife
- Constructing Canoe launch, fishing pier

Competitive GOSP Projects

Wildlife habitat management through

- Prescribed burns
- Tree planting
- Reforestation

Project Funding Types

Local Parks and Trails
of State and Regional Significance

State Stewardship

State Acquisition

Local Trails and Parks of Regional Significance

Available to **local governments, constituted recreation authorities, and nongovernmental entities**

- 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 nongovernmental entities only.

These entities may apply for restoration or improvement projects on permanently protected conservation land and current State-owned parks.

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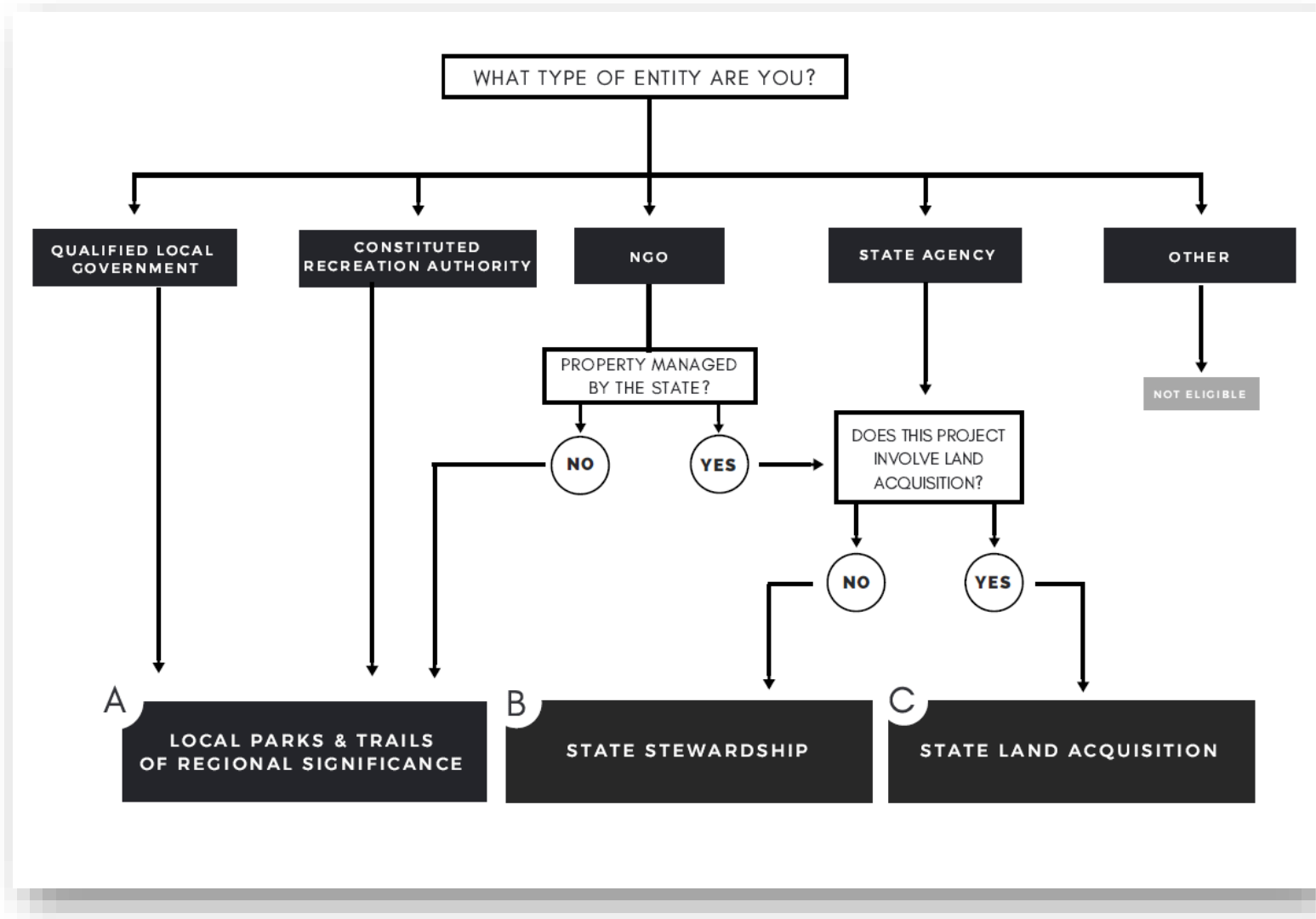
State Acquisition

Available to: **State of Georgia agencies and nongovernmental entities only**

- Acquisitions of property, to include conservation easements

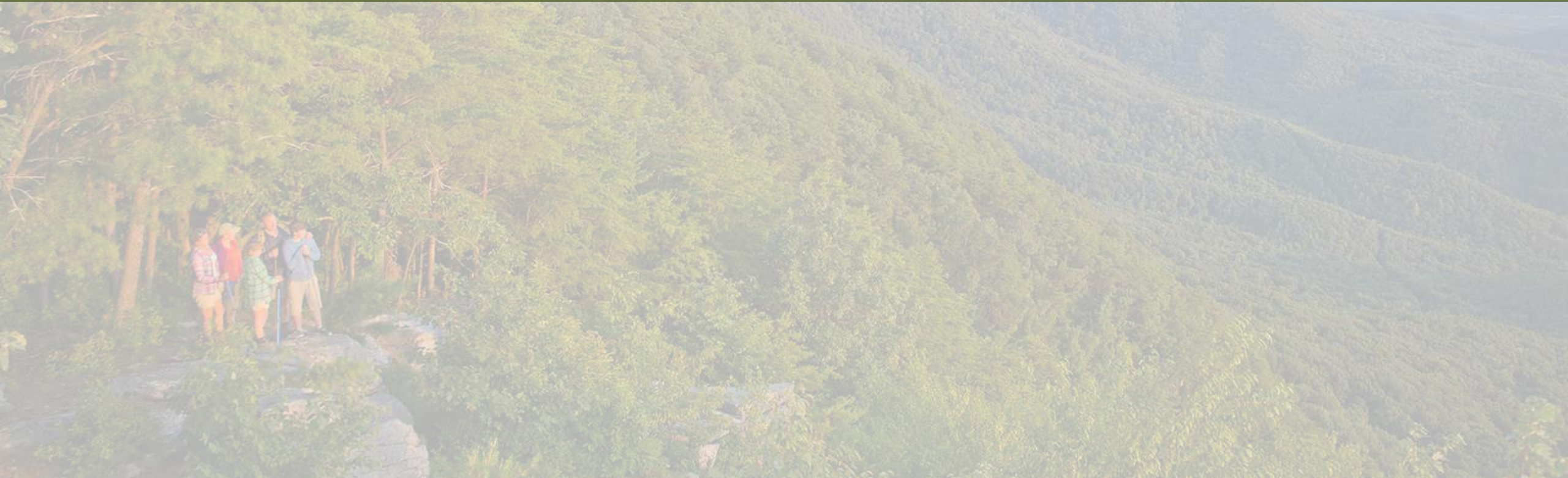- **Combination projects:** Acquisition **AND** Stewardship elements

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

Project Funding Types

The Pre-Application

The Online Application Process

- 100% online process

- Access will be available at www.gadnr.org/gosp on August 1, 2024

The Online Application Process

- The Pre-Application is the initial stage of the competitive application process.

- This is the only competitive section of the complete application process.

- Selected projects will be invited to submit a Second Level Application.

Before the Pre-Application

- Before beginning your Pre-application, ensure that no previously completed work is included in your proposal.

- **GOSP will not reimburse for ANY work performed before a mutually executed agreement, anticipated to occur in the summer of 2025.**

- Engineering, environmental reviews, and grant writing within 18 months of the close of the second level application, limited to 15% of the total project cost acceptable **FOR MATCH ONLY.**

Before the Pre-Application - Check Eligibility

- Make sure your organization and project are eligible **before** you start work on your Pre-application.

- Does your project meet the purposes of the grant for which you want to apply?

- Do you have the support of the authorizing official or officials who must sign off on each stage of this grant process?

- Verify that you can fulfill the match requirement.

Before the Pre-application - Be Prepared

§ Understand the amount of work it will take to complete the application **<u>before</u>** you begin. Sample application can be viewed on our website prior to the application start date.

§ Majority of applicants spend between **40 - 80 hours** preparing documents for and submitting a Pre-application.

§ 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.

Pre-application - Focus on the Narrative

- The narrative and budget help the reviewer understand how you'll spend the funds. Don't just tell us **why** you need the funding, tell us **what you need the funding for.**

- Be specific. What makes your project better than your competitors' similar project?

- Focus on the tangible project elements and impact.

Use other criteria questions to tell us about the economic impact, public support, etc.

- Avoid "We hope to…", "In the future, we may add…", "There are plans to…"

Pre-application - Follow Directions

- The manual is your guide to filling out the application. It contains all the instructions for successfully completing each section of the application. Have the manual open while answering questions.

- Carefully read all criteria questions so you understand exactly what the reviewer is looking for.

- Lots of questions require the applicant to upload documentation to receive credit and you don't want to miss out on those points.

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

Pre-application - Keep the Reviewers in Mind

- Make it easy for the Reviewers to award you points.

- Assume that the reviewers have never been to your city or county and have never heard of your project. Maps, photos and planning documents help the reviewers understand the overall vision of your project.

- Fluff kills and squanders your opportunity to sell your vision. Be concise. (what, where, how, why…) Pay attention to the word count and focus on answering the questions that are asked. Use clear and direct language.

- Make it easy for the Reviewer to measure the impact of your project. Reviewers get excited about Georgia's outdoor resources; tell them your story in a way that they get excited about your project.

Pre-application - Ask for Help

- Our Grants Specialists are here to answer your questions.
- Reach out if you need assistance.

Additional Requirements of All Applicants

- Pre-Application Cover Letter
- Resolution committing to funding availability
- Preliminary Site Plan / Conceptual Plan
- Project Boundary map
- Property Location Map
- **Generalized** cost estimate/Project Budget
- Appraisals (Acquisition projects only)

Project Budget – All Applicants

- **Must utilize the form on our website: www.gadnr.org/gosp**

- Should be **generalized, but still comprehensive,** in the Pre-Application.

- Include all eligible elements in your budget.

- You 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 – Consider changes carefully!**

Understanding the Project Budget Worksheet

GEORGIA OUTDOOR STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
PROJECT BUDGET WORKSHEET

Applicant Name:

Project Title:

Date:

Project History

Total Project Cost: $1,204,000.00

Total Amount of Funding Requested: $710,000.00

Total Match Commitment: $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.

Budget - Partners

- All contributions from your partners must be included in the budget.

- All DNR grant programs value partnerships. Collaboration shows the reviewers others invested in this project.

- Remember, a letter of support is not the same as a financial partner.

- Partners must provide a monetary value (cash or in-kind) to the project.

To qualify for points on "Partnership" question partners must commit to at least 1% of the total requested funding.

The Second-Level Application

Successful Applicants invited to the Second Level Application shall submit:

- Financial info to receive ACH reimbursements

- **DETAILED** Project Budget worksheet

- Project Implementation Schedule

- Environmental Review documents needed by DNR

After Your Application is Complete

- All applicants must attend a mandatory financial workshop prior to receiving a project agreement from GADNR.

- The day a mutually signed agreement is signed is considered "Day 1". Grantees are eligible for funding and have 24 months to complete their project measured from Day 1.

- The reimbursement process will be covered in depth during the Financial Workshop.
  - Expect a robust level of required documentation (please see the program manual for more details).

Close Out and Post-Completion
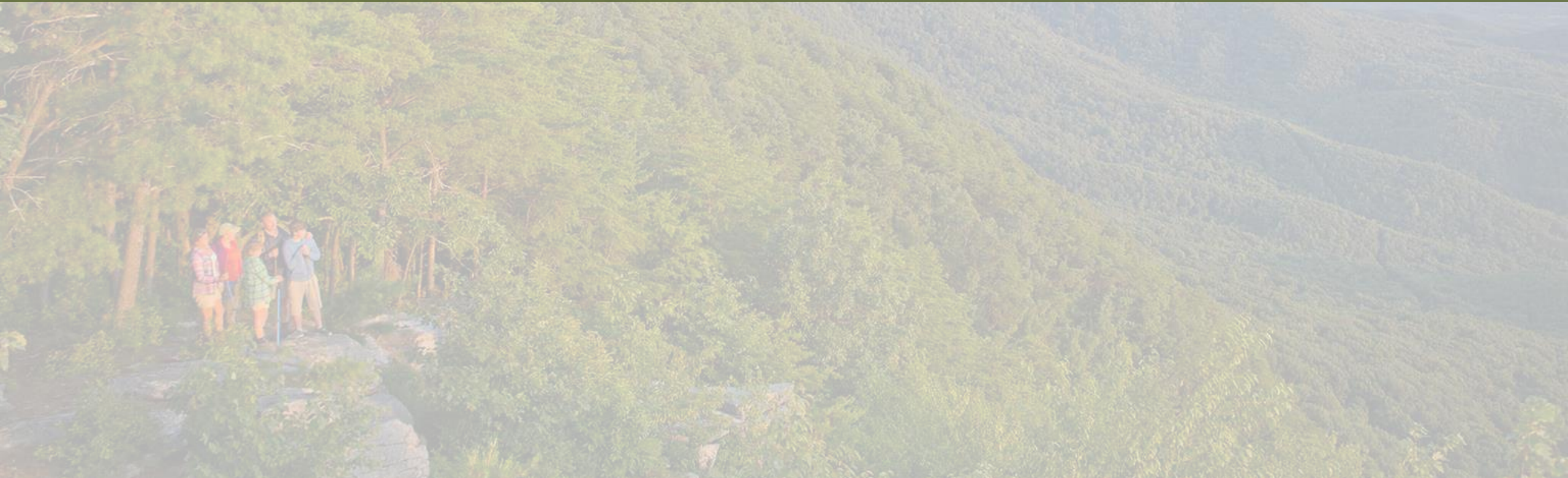
Close out

- Close out must occur within 45 days of project completion.

- Grantee completes a final quarterly report and marks it as "Final". It shall include:
    - Indication 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 completes a final reimbursement request and marks it as "Final"

- For acquisitions only – A copy of an updated property deed with required protective language **and recording stamp** from the local jurisdiction's County Clerk's office.

25% Retainage

- Taken out of each reimbursement request

- Final payment of the 25% retainage paid by DNR upon satisfaction of all parties' commitments and responsibilities.

- If payment of the full 25% would create a shortfall of the applicant's match, DNR will adjust the payable retainage amount accordingly.

- In the instance of overpayment, the grantee is required to refund an amount back to GEFA equivalent to the overage.

Long-term Obligations for GOSP Recipients

- All documents must be retained for at least 5 years.
  - 5 yrs. post any litigation if applicable

- Must retain legal control and oversight of the property.

- Must properly maintain the property.

- Real Property or conservation easements acquired with GOSP funds shall be maintained in a manner consistent with conservation land and must comply with protective language in the deed.

- If the protected status is discontinued on a parcel, such property must be replaced by other conservation land of equal or greater monetary and resource protection value

- Grant recipients may charge reasonable user fees. Revenues must go towards the management/maintenance of the project.