



Georgia Outdoor Stewardship Program GOSP

June 24, 2026

A group of five people, including children and adults, are hiking on a stone path through a dense forest. They are dressed in outdoor gear like hats and jackets. The background shows a vast, hazy mountain range covered in green trees.

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

NOTE

This workshop does not contain all information and applicant responsibilities associated with GOSP.

Applicants must adhere to the respective state and federal requirements.

www.gadnr.org/grants

GA DNR Grants Unit

State and Federal Grant Opportunities

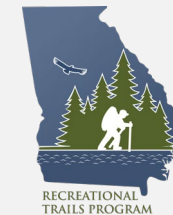
Georgia Outdoor
Stewardship Program



Land & Water
Conservation Fund



Recreational Trails
Program

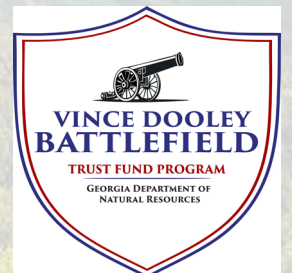


gadnr.org/grants

Vince Dooley Battlefield Trust Fund (VDB Program)

- ❑ Provides matching grants to assist eligible nonprofit organizations and state agencies for the fee-simple acquisition or purchase of permanent historic preservation easements on qualified Georgia battlefields identified in the following reports by National Parks Service:
 - ❑ The Report on the Nation's Civil War Battlefields by the Civil War Sites Advisory Commission
 - ❑ The Report to Congress on the Historic Preservation of Revolutionary War and War of 1812 Sites in the United States
- ❑ Funds consist of annual appropriations by the General Assembly to the fund, public or private grants, gifts, donations, or contributions dedicated to the fund for battlefield preservation, and moneys from any other source, including local, state, or federal program funds dedicated to the fund for battlefield preservation.
- ❑ Eligible applicants include:
 - ❑ State agencies with primary mission of preservation, protection, or conservation of natural, historical, or cultural resources.
 - ❑ Not for profit charitable corporations or trusts, authorized to do business in Georgia, primarily focused on the acquisition and management of interests in land for historic preservation purposes.
- ❑ Funding cycles are offered annually and are administered on a first-come, first-served basis, subject to the availability of funds.
- ❑ Grants shall not exceed 50 percent of the appraised value of the land or permanent protective interest therein.
- ❑ Requires at least \$1.00 in matching contributions for each \$1.00 received from the fund.
- ❑ Organizations acquiring property under the program shall grant to the Department or another qualified holder a perpetual conservation easement placing restrictions on the use or development of the property.

gadnr.org/grants



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.



LWCF

- **Minimum** funding: \$25,000
- **Maximum** funding: \$750,000
- Minimum match: 50% of total project
- 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



GOSP

- **Minimum** funding: \$500,000
- Maximum funding: \$3,000,000
- Minimum match: 25% of total project
- 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



RTP

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





Georgia Outdoor Stewardship Program GOSP

A background image showing a group of people hiking on a trail through a dense forest. In the distance, a mountain range is visible under a clear sky. The image is slightly faded to allow text to be overlaid.

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 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 the Georgia Environmental Finance Authority (GEFA).

Voting Members

- ❑ The Commissioner of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources (Chairperson of the Board)
- ❑ Director of the State Forestry Commission
- ❑ Director of the Environmental Protection Division (EPD)
- ❑ Commissioner of the Department 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

- ❑ Director of the DNR Coastal Resources Division
- ❑ Director of the DNR Wildlife Resources Division
- ❑ Director of the 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

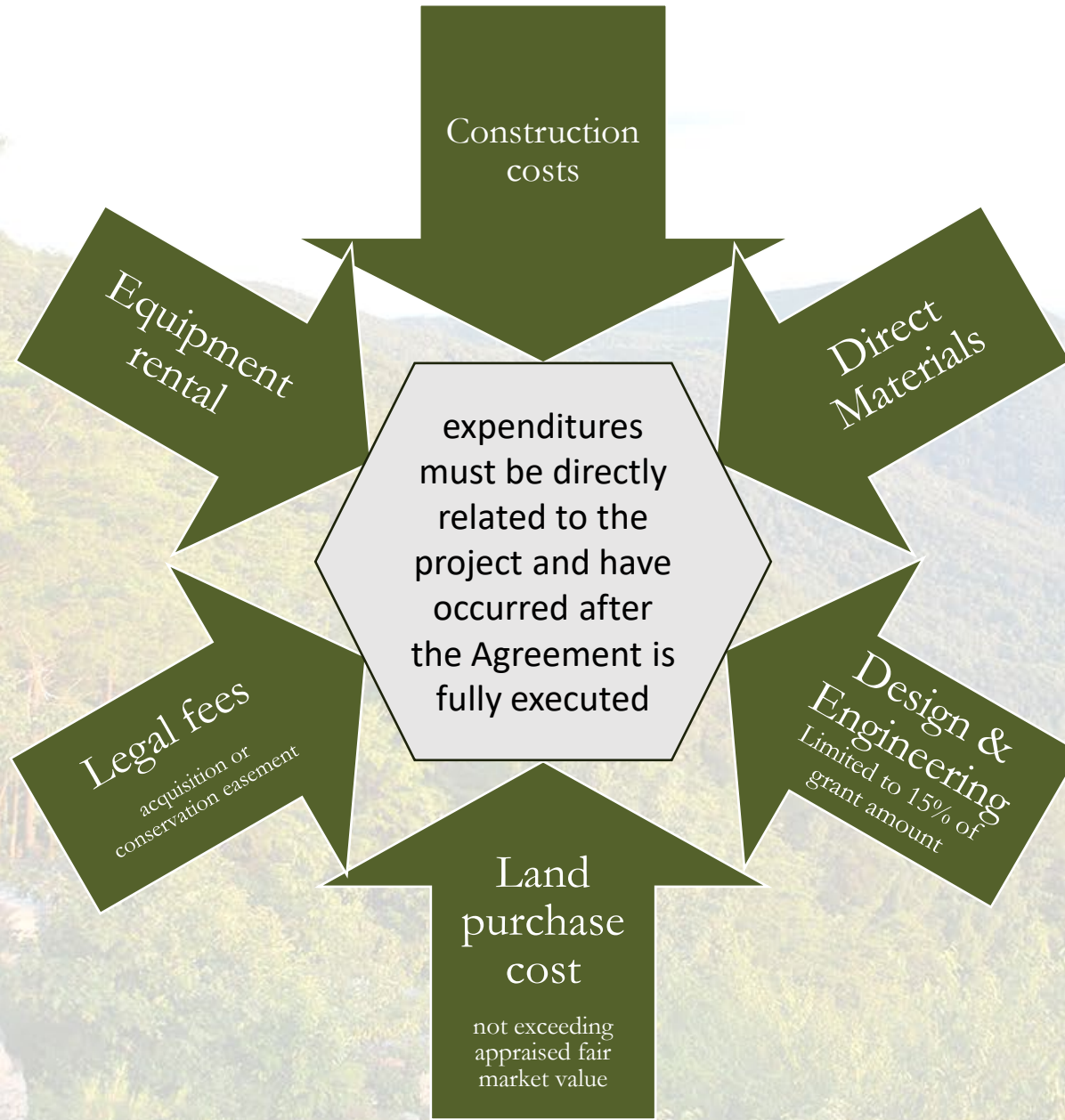
Minimum match requirement of 25% of project cost

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 and equipment provided by the Applicant
- ❑ 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 LWCF and GOSP. Projects must be independent.

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

Competitive Pre-application; scored & ranked based on approved evaluation criteria

Approval Process

Successful projects invited to non-competitive Second-level Application

2026-2027 GOSP Funding Cycle Timeline

Pre-application
August 3 –
October 16, 2026

2nd Level
Spring 2027 –
May 28, 2027

Project
Agreement
Summer 2027

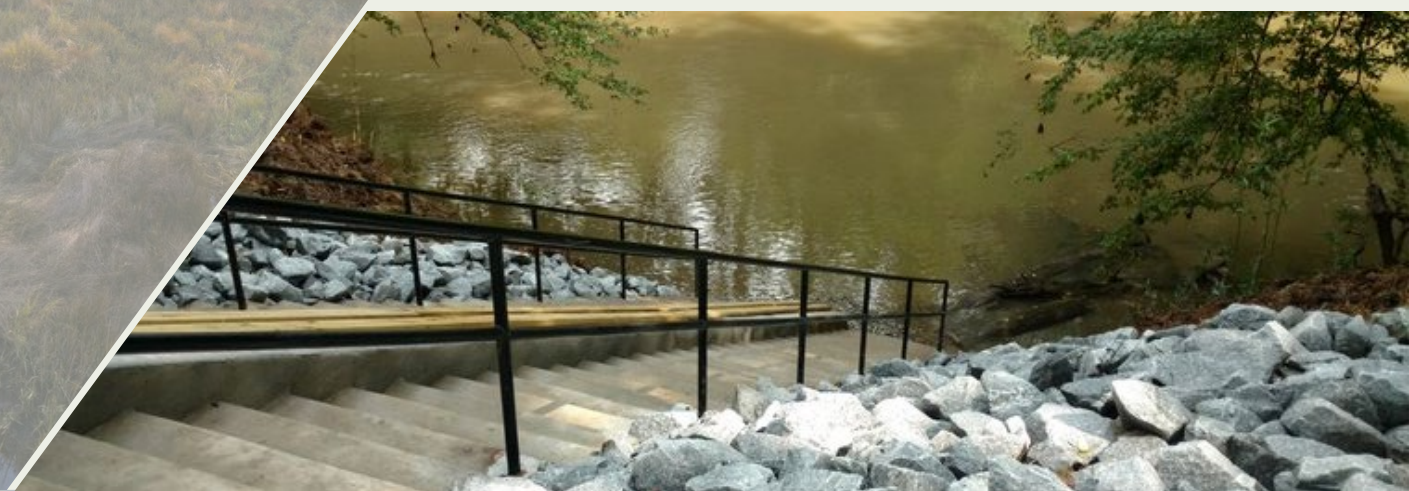
What makes a good project for GOSP?

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

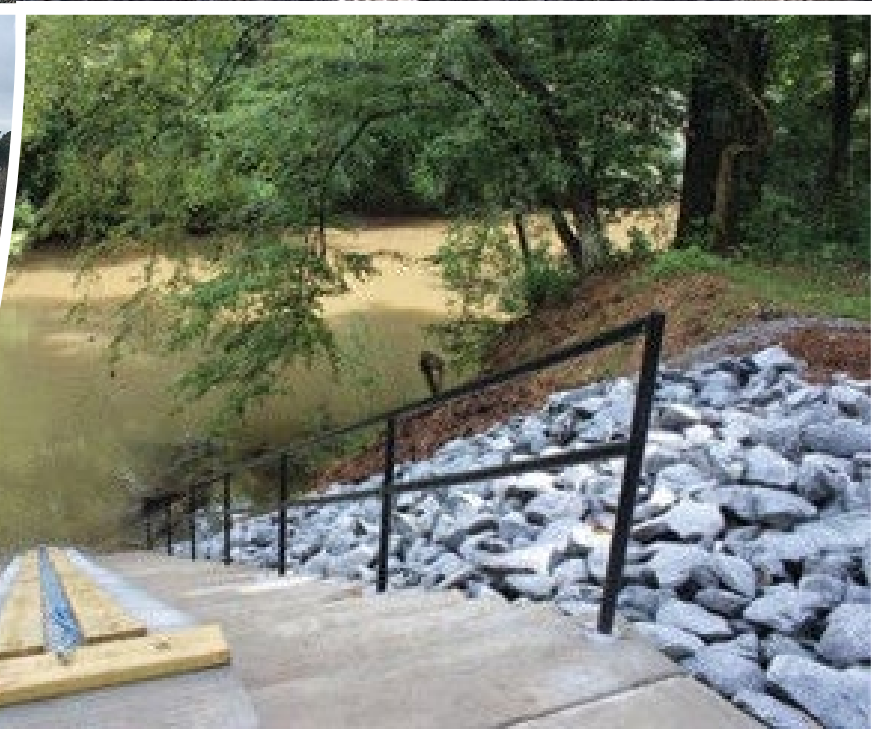
Boating, Hiking, Camping, Fishing, Hunting, Jogging, Biking, Walking, or similar outdoor activities.

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

Providing new opportunities for hunting and/or wildlife viewing

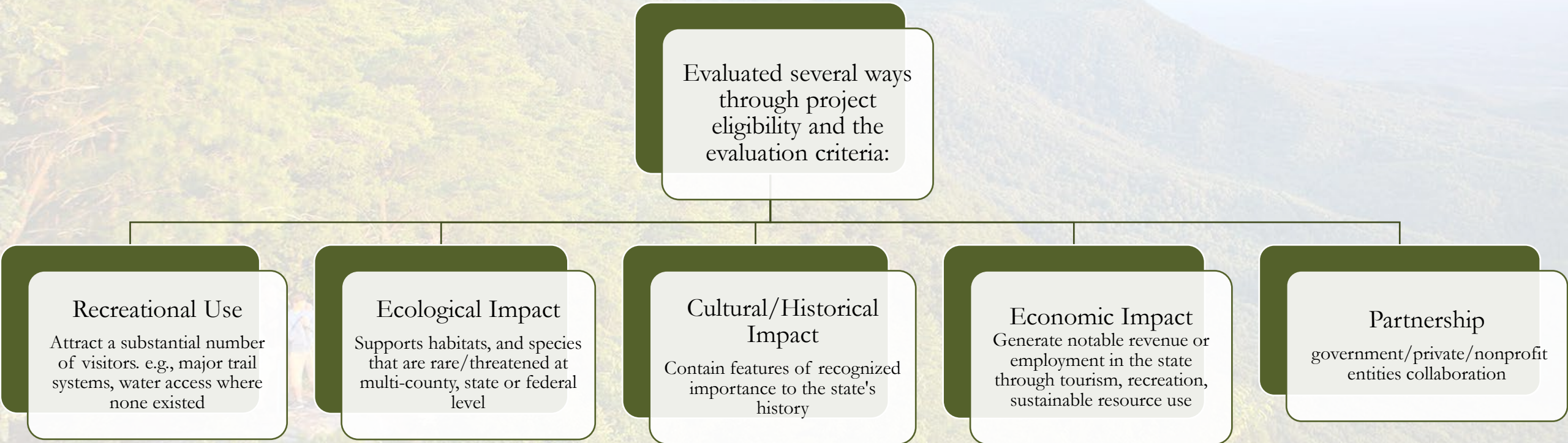
Campsite construction

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.



Funding Categories

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



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

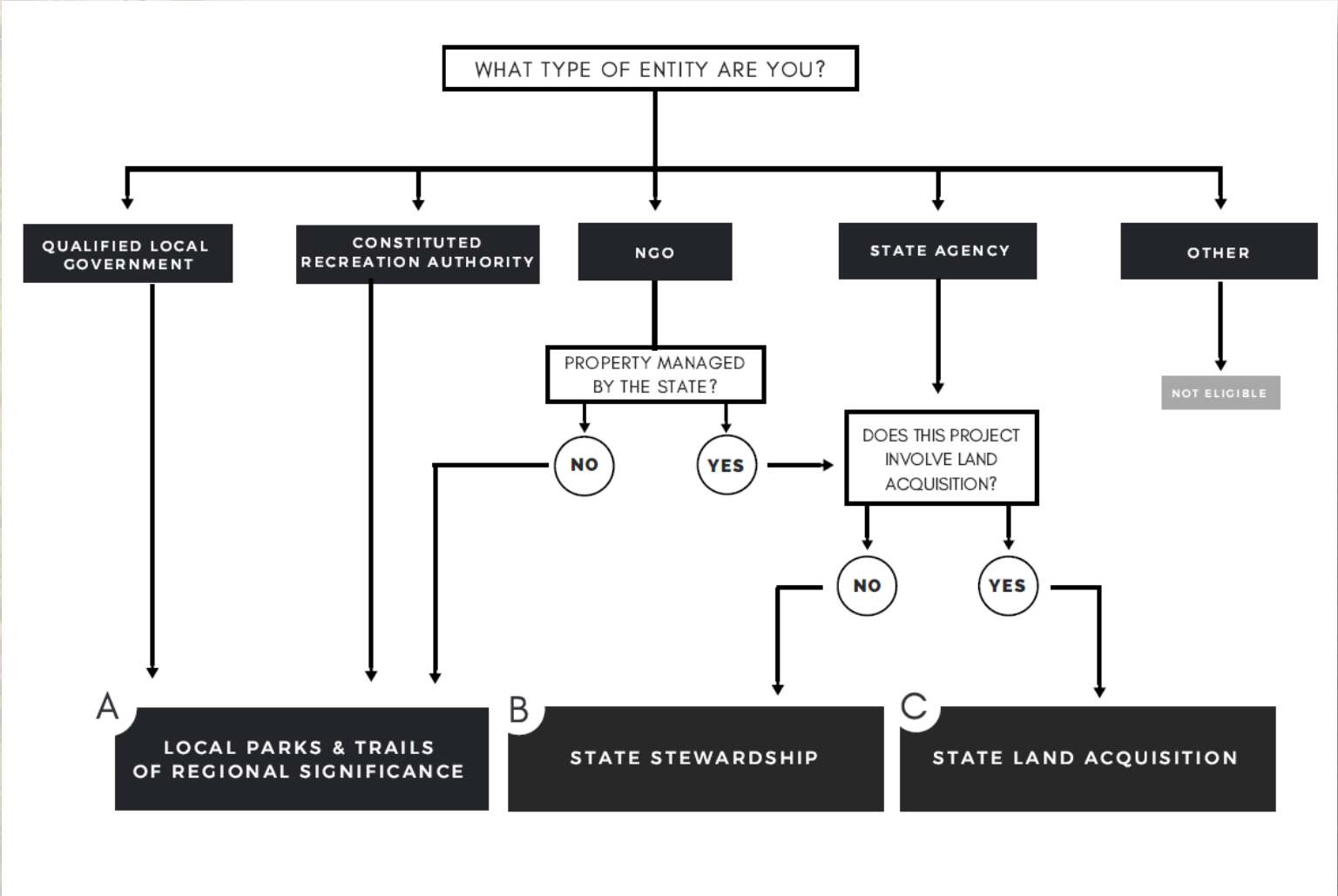
State Land Acquisition

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.



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 2027.

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 needed to complete the application.

Application questions are available in the program manual.

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.

Focus on the Narrative

Keep Reviewers in mind

The narrative and budget help the reviewer understand how you'll spend the funds.

Tell us clearly what you need the funds 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..."

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 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:

Total Amount of Funding Requested:

Total Match Commitment:

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

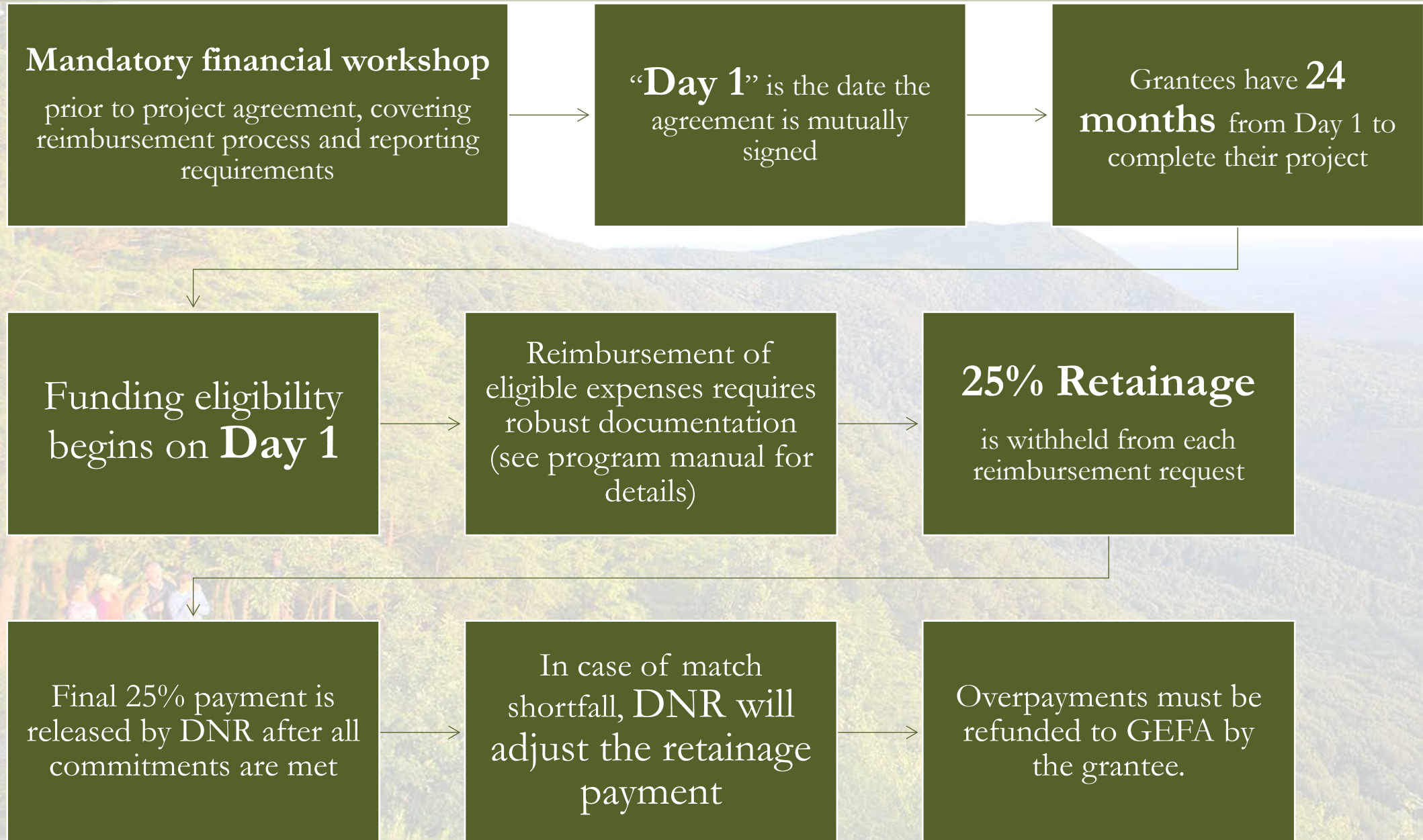
Phase I Environmental Survey

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



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

Turning Opportunity Into Action



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



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



Check 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

Georgia Outdoor Stewardship Program



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

Land & Water Conservation Fund



Rayne Gaston
Program Coordinator
Land & Water Conservation Fund
Rayne.gaston1@dnr.ga.gov
404-463-1779

Recreational Trails Program



Ouicia Jolly
Program Coordinator
Recreational Trails Program
ouicia.jolly@dnr.ga.gov
404-463-1779